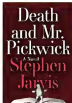


Death and Mr Pickwick

Chronicles - Volume 2

by Stephen Jarvis



June 13 2015



- ▶ Yesterday was a pretty much perfect day: *Death and Mr Pickwick* was the #1 bestselling novel in London - and Elaine and I went on a boat trip to Windsor, which gave us the opportunity to sample the civilised delights of Pimms on board, on a sunny day...



- Our goal was to visit the grave of Charles Knight, who appears as a character in *Death and Mr Pickwick*. Knight published *The Penny Magazine*, which Seymour dismissed as 'twaddle' - and Mr Pickwick's scientific mission to expand his range of observation, which sets *The Pickwick Papers* in motion, was Seymour's attempt to ridicule Knight's illustrated magazine, which similarly attempted to expand the range of observation of its readers, via inoffensive pictures of animals, architecture and landforms.



- The grave itself obviously hadn't attracted any attention in a while, and a thick layer of dust had to be brushed away before 'Charles Knight' became visible.



- Knight actually has two plaques in his honour in Windsor, and we inspected the second as well...but only after...



- ...lunch in the Carpenter's Arms. The classic burger there was certainly good, but...



- ...the Somerset camembert starter, which we ate in honour of Seymour's birthplace, was to die for. Then...



- ...it was time for the boat trip home. Our scientific mission of the day was over.

June 13



- ▶ Frank Bouchier-Hayes has found this footage about the Pickwick centenary celebrations:
- ▶ <http://www.britishpathe.com/video/news-in-a-nutshell-mr-pickwick-rides-to-rochester/query/CHARLES+PATHE>
- ▶ I can remember going through scrapbooks of old cuttings at the Dickens Museum, and there was one entirely about the centenary. I particularly recall a photograph showing a huge crowd in Tewkesbury celebrating the event, and you can see a similar crowd in Rochester in this footage. Great find, Frank.

June 13



- ▶ Here is Peter Sadlera's latest post:
- ▶ "After some refreshments and ale in the Sluice House Tavern...



- "...the avid *Death and Mr Pickwick* reader wants to go to the Theatre, this time to the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. The Theatre Royal dates back to 1663 making it the oldest London theatre. Joseph Grimaldi the famous clown split his appearances between Sadler's Wells and Drury Lane - on occasions playing both theatres in one night. *Mother Goose* was a very successful play and of course we have to mention *Puss in Boots*."

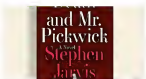


June 13



- ▶ Peter Stedens has posted a picture for Seymour, 'The Mounts-in Labour' or 'Mounts-in Labour' by Peter Stedens, 1829.
- ▶ "Seymour's caricature refers to the Roman Catholic Relief Act passed by the British Parliament on March 24, 1829. The Act permitted members of the Catholic Church to sit in parliament, something previously forbidden even if they won an election. The Catholic middle class could now hope new careers in the higher civil service and in the judiciary. In the centre of Seymour's print are the politicians Arthur Wellesley, 1st Duke of Wellington and Prime Minister 1828-1830, Sir Robert Peel, and Bunsford (1788-1800) and Prime Minister 1834-1835, and an old woman is doctor, apothecary, and nurse. She is holding a screaming lord of Political Cause, and a large open book, entitled The Times. On the far left is the Irish politician Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847), founder of the Catholic Association and proposer of the Emancipation Bill. The Times forecast its Emancipation Bill in December 1828 and in February published some of its provisions. Seymour published his caricature on March 2 and the Act was formally introduced on March 3."

June 13



Book Keeping with Stephen Jarvis | Book Keeping

As the U.S. release date for the most richly imagined Dickensian novel David and Mr. Pickwick nears, Stephen Jarvis was generous enough to answer our questions about his debut.

FSGBOOKKEEPING.COM

- ▶ Here is an interview with me which has just been posted on the Farrar, Straus & Giroux website:
- ▶ <http://www.fsgbookkeeping.com/book-keeping-with-stephen-jarvis/>

June 13



- ▶ Here is Peter Stadlera again:
- ▶ "This is the frontispiece to *Life in London*, a kind of predecessor to *The Pickwick Papers*. The frontispiece was intended to illustrate the varieties of "Life in London," from the king on his throne at the top of the column to the lowest members of society at the base. At the centre are the protagonists of the tale, Tom, Jerry & Logic, three men about town.



- ▶ "Authored by Pierce Egan, their adventures proved best sellers in serial form and were collected into a book in 1830, remaining in print for the rest of the century, spawning no less than five stage versions, and delineating a social landscape that was to prove the territory for both the fictions of Charles Dickens and the commentaries of Henry Mayhew. Situated somewhere between the romps of Fielding, Smollett and Sterne and prefiguring Dickens's catalogue of comic grotesques in *The Pickwick Papers*, the humour of *Life in London* spoke vividly to its time, yet appears merely curious two centuries later.



- ▶ "By the end of the nineteenth century, the comedy had gone out of date, as Thackeray admitted even as he confessed to a lingering affection for the work. "As to the literary contents of the book, they have passed down away," he wrote. He reserved his enthusiasm for the illustrations by the Crookshank brothers (which you see here) declaring, "But the pictures! Oh! The pictures are noble still!"



June 13



- I have just discovered that signed copies of *Death and Mr Pickwick* are already on sale on Abebooks! A signed copy, bearing a quotation, is actually priced at £155!!!! (\$240.)

June 14



I am sure many of you know that Ron Moody, who starred as Fagin in the movie *Oliver*, died the other day. I did not intend to mention this here, because *Death and Mr Pickwick* is solely concerned with *The Pickwick Papers*, not the rest of Dickens's output. However, Moody's obituary revealed something which is relevant to *Death and Mr Pickwick*, as it relates to the great clown, Joseph Grimaldi, who is a key character in my novel.

The obituary noted that, after Moody had achieved great acclaim for playing Fagin on the West End stage (before the movie was made) he received an offer of £50,000 to play Fagin on Broadway, and also many other lucrative offers of roles. He turned them all down because he wanted to write. He retreated to the British Museum for five years, to work on a musical based on the life of Joseph Grimaldi.



- ▶ "I wanted to write a musical based on the life of the greatest clown there's ever been," said Moody, "and I wanted it to be the greatest musical there's ever been. I read everything I could on the clown."
- ▶ Unfortunately, the show was a flop in the West End and closed in three weeks. "I devoted five years of my life to it," said Moody, "and all I got was abuse from the British press and indifference from the British public." His descent into depression was only halted by the offer to play Fagin in the *Oliver* movie. I wonder whether any recordings of the musical survive?

June 14



Send out the clowns... why are they losing popularity?

They've been a cornerstone of the entertainment industry for more than 200 years, but children are increasingly turning away from them. Why? And will the clowns have the last laugh?

THE GUARDIAN.COM | BY THE LONERS

- ▶ Peter Stadlera has now found this article on clown popularity which mentions Grimaldi and *The Pickwick Papers*.
- ▶ http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2015/jun/07/why-clowns-are-dying-out?CMP=share_btn_fb

June 14



- ▶ "Wowza!!!!" That's what Elaine said when she heard that *Deoth and Mr Pickwick* had made the "Season's Best Literary Fiction" list in *OPRAH MAGAZINE!!!!* (A million thanks to Cynthia St John for telling me the news!) You can see what the magazine says about the novel on the next page.



LITERARY FACTS

THE LITERARY FACTS SECTION IS A COLLECTION OF FACTS AND FIGURES THAT ARE INTERESTING AND RELEVANT TO THE LITERARY WORLD.

1850

Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield* was published in three volumes. The novel is a semi-autobiographical work that follows the life of a young boy who grows up in a harsh environment and eventually finds his way to a successful career in the law.

1851

Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* was published in three volumes. The novel is a semi-autobiographical work that follows the life of a young boy who grows up in a harsh environment and eventually finds his way to a successful career in the law.

1852

Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* was published in three volumes. The novel is a semi-autobiographical work that follows the life of a young boy who grows up in a harsh environment and eventually finds his way to a successful career in the law.

1853

Charles Dickens's *Hard Times* was published in three volumes. The novel is a semi-autobiographical work that follows the life of a young boy who grows up in a harsh environment and eventually finds his way to a successful career in the law.

1854

Charles Dickens's *Little Dorrit* was published in three volumes. The novel is a semi-autobiographical work that follows the life of a young boy who grows up in a harsh environment and eventually finds his way to a successful career in the law.



1855

Charles Dickens's *Sketches of Bores* was published in three volumes. The novel is a semi-autobiographical work that follows the life of a young boy who grows up in a harsh environment and eventually finds his way to a successful career in the law.

1856

Charles Dickens's *Sketches of Bores* was published in three volumes. The novel is a semi-autobiographical work that follows the life of a young boy who grows up in a harsh environment and eventually finds his way to a successful career in the law.

1857

Charles Dickens's *Sketches of Bores* was published in three volumes. The novel is a semi-autobiographical work that follows the life of a young boy who grows up in a harsh environment and eventually finds his way to a successful career in the law.

1858

Charles Dickens's *Sketches of Bores* was published in three volumes. The novel is a semi-autobiographical work that follows the life of a young boy who grows up in a harsh environment and eventually finds his way to a successful career in the law.

1859

Charles Dickens's *Sketches of Bores* was published in three volumes. The novel is a semi-autobiographical work that follows the life of a young boy who grows up in a harsh environment and eventually finds his way to a successful career in the law.

9 DEATH AND MR. PICKWICK by Stephen Jarvis (714)

In the early 19th century, London's shadowy back streets teemed with booksellers and publishing hucksters. That world is lavishly re-created in this fanciful caper, a fictionalized history of an actual literary feud between Charles Dickens and the illustrator who accused him of pilfering one of his characters.

June 16



- ▶ The other day, I had a delightful surprise: a letter from a Mrs Anne Foley, who is a descendant of the original Moses Pickwick, the foundling given the name of the place where he was discovered - the village of Pickwick. In due course, *The Pickwick Papers* would turn the foundling's surname into the most famous name in the world. Moses was Anne's 8 x great-grandfather.
- ▶ And Anne sent me a photograph showing the grandson of the foundling, also called Moses Pickwick, who ran the White Hart coaching inn in Bath. Here you can see Moses without the luxuriant wig which he wore as a younger man.



- ▶ Also in her letter was a sketch of the coat of arms granted to another member of the Pickwick family, William Eleazer Pickwick, in May 1838. Note the blue wings, which presumably allude to travel, and thereby to the coaching business.

June 16



- ▶ Peter Stadlera has posted a number of pictures from a magazine in which Seymour's early work frequently appeared, *The Economist and General Adviser*.



- Unfortunately, all of Seymour's contributions were anonymous, and so one cannot with certainty identify him as the artist.



FISH MARKET.

- ▶ Peter writes: "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about Knight & Lacey in Paternoster Road. They published *The Economist & General Adviser*, containing papers on subjects like markets, marketing, drunkenness, gardening, cookery, travelling, housekeeping, management of income, distilling, baking, brewing, shops and shopping, amusements, useful recipes and much more besides... Interesting magazine, and here you'll see I've posted a few of its eye-catching illustrations - such as *The Fish Market*, *The Miser and Droughts*."



THE WOOD.—(See p. 10.)



THE WOOD.
(From p. 10.)

June 16



Book Review: Death and Mr. Pickwick | Open Letters Monthly - an Arts and Literature Review

An author's review of the world that gave birth to the greatest career of Charles Dickens and his most famous companion

OPENLETTERSMONTHLY.COM

- ▶ Here's the latest review of *Death and Mr Pickwick*:
- ▶ <https://www.openlettersmonthly.com/book-review-death-and-mr-pickwick/>
- ▶ "With lavish, garrulous detail, Jarvis takes his readers into the seamy underworld of early 19th century London, filling his story with dozens of vivid, very Dickensian characters and fleshing everything out with frequent wonderful set-piece location descriptions."

June 17



- ▶ I am now going to post a statement of mine which has just been sent out to the Inimitable Boz Dickensian Yahoo group, to which I occasionally contribute. My statement refers to activities in another online Dickensian group, the DICKENS-L Forum, to which I am also an occasional contributor. Or at least I HAVE been a contributor to DICKENS-L in the past - their decision to close down the discussion of *Death and Mr Pickwick* makes it extremely unlikely I shall ever post there again. (In my Inimitable Boz post, "Bob" refers to an American academic, Bob Lapidus, and Michael Slater is the well-known expert on Dickens.)



► Hi everyone

The discussion about *Death and Mr Pickwick* has apparently been closed down on the Charles Dickens DICKENS-L Forum, with the moderator's message "Dickens-Bashing and Dickens-Seymour: Wrapping things up." I guessed this would happen. Discussions in this group have been peremptorily closed down before, and so I had already decided that the post I sent to DICKENS-L a few days ago would be my last on the forum. Certain things should be made clear:

MICHAEL SLATER
CHARLES
DICKENS



- ▶ The 'accepted' origin of *Pickwick* is demonstrably wrong. Some other origin of *Pickwick* is true. My novel provides another origin - one which is entirely plausible, supported by the available evidence and moreover is informed by statements made by contemporaries of Dickens and Seymour. It differs substantially from the accepted origin. For instance, there was no 'Himrod Club' proposal. Also, Dickens and Seymour met more than once. Dickens did not take over the project until after Seymour's death, and even then Seymour's influence continued. The DICKENS-L moderator has glowing praise for Michael Slater's account of *Pickwick's* origin - but it is an account which is not true.

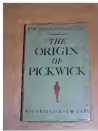
art and the wish to die

Fred Cutter



John Everett Millais, *The Boy with the Broken Heart*, 1868. Oil on canvas. Reproduced by permission of the Tate Gallery, London.

- ▶ Also, the most extensive academic investigation of Seymour's suicide, by the suicidologist Fred Cutter, clearly puts the blame on Dickens. Seymour may have had a long-term low-level 'willingness to die' but something happened in the days before the suicide to cause that willingness to soar. Most Dickensians are not even aware of Cutter's work.
- ▶ It would be perverse not to look to Seymour's meeting with Dickens, from which the artist returned in a state of extreme emotional distress, as the immediate cause of the suicide. Yet this perverseness is what happens in Dickensian circles. Dickensians also point to the suicide note, in which Seymour blames no one, as 'exonerating' Dickens. This is a red herring, as you will see in my book. The note does not exonerate Dickens at all.



- I might add that in any historical study, you do not get the evidence you want, but the evidence that history leaves you. Evidence about Seymour mysteriously vanished in 1928 and I suspect it was deliberately suppressed by members of the Dickens Fellowship of that period - members such as JWT Ley, the co-author of the book on the left. I think that Ley and others knew that the traditional account of *Pickwick's* origin was a lie. If, as I strongly suspect, Seymour was gay, that may have been another factor in the suppression of the truth.

The Telegraph



Book review: 'The Secret Garden' by Frances Hodgson Burnett

By Sarah Lyall
Published 10th April 2015



- My novel was described by *The Telegraph* as "a masterpiece of imagination supported by a mountain of research." To characterise me as a 'Dickens basher' is ridiculous.

Bob, in earlier posts, skipped ahead when reading the novel, to the parts featuring Dickens's encounter with Seymour. This, as I explained to Bob, is completely the wrong way to read the book. It has to be read in its entirety, from start to finish. Some of the major points do not appear until long after Seymour's suicide, and are raised by Seymour's son, whom I place in the role of 'detective'.



- It has to be stressed too that - obviously - a novel is not written in the same way as an academic book. I can imagine academics thinking I have committed all sorts of howlers - "Ooh look, he thinks that Seymour and Dickens met more than once tee hee."



- Last week, just three weeks after publication, *Death and Mr Pickwick* became the #1 bestselling fiction in London in the *Evening Standard* chart. Last night, I discovered that it had made the list of "The Season's Best Literary Fiction" in *Oprah Magazine*. This novel is not going away, and Dickensians had better get used to that. Crude characterisation of me as a 'Dickensbasher' is not the way ahead.

I shall not send this message to the DICKENS-L moderator, but if anyone wants to forward it to him, they have my blessing.

June 17



- ▶ Peter Stadlera now tells us a role played by an actor mentioned in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, John Liston.
- ▶ "Paul Pry was the eponymous character of an 1825 comedy by the English playwright John Poole (1788-1872). Its storyline is centred on a comical, idle, meddling and mischievous fellow consumed with curiosity who leaves behind an umbrella everywhere he goes in order to have an excuse to return and eavesdrop. However, he turns hero when he rescues from a well papers that incriminate more serious troublemakers. The English comedian John Liston (1776-1846) created the part, dressed in striped pants, hessian boots, top hat and tailcoat.



- His portrayal was so popular that Liston as Fry became the most reproduced actor of the century. Peter Piper, the Younger, composed the song *The Adventures of Paul Fry*, written expressly for Mr Liston.



© Bartholomew's Parl.



- ▶ "The song ends with allusions to the numerous images of Lison as Prg."
- ▶ They've got me in the picture shops, they have,
upon my honour;
I'm next to Venus, which, they say, is quite a fibel on
her...
No matter, if my friends still smile, their plaudits
ne'er denying,
To yield them more amusement, why I'll still
continue Prg-ing
Prg, Prg, Prg,
Every body laughs when they behold Real Prg."

June 18



- ▶ In *Death and Mr Pickwick*, I cover the world of nineteenth-century publishing, centring on *The Pickwick Papers* and its publishers Edward Chapman and William Hall. But of course *Death and Mr Pickwick* itself has a publishing story behind it, featuring two key people. One is Dan Franklin, at Jonathan Cape, of the Random House Group. Dan Franklin has been described as “the publishing colossus behind Britain’s superstar authors.” Dan was responsible for the editing of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, but I am sure he won’t mind my saying that he made only the most minimal changes to the text – sometimes things like “Shouldn’t there be a comma here?” In essence, he accepted the 800 page manuscript in its entirety.



- The other key person in *Death and Mr Pickwick's* publishing story is Jonathan Galassi at Farrar, Straus & Giroux.



- ▶ Jonathan Galassi has indeed just published his own first novel, *Muse*, which is concerned with the world of publishing.

Renouncing Authors

Jonathan Calassi, the longtime head of Harris, Franklin & Green, didn't stop for the writing of his first novel, "Muse," which takes place in the world of New York publishing. (Click Wagon covers "Muse" on Page 36.)

Though writing about characters based on real-life colleagues might rattle the nerves of some, Calassi said it was small beer: after three years writing the book, now "done at all, but," like Lewis it "is a challenge to execute," he said. "I'm just intent it was like to engage with fiction from the other side of the table, as it were."

From that side of the table, Calassi's book had to ignore the rule of the publishing business in the book's title: "When you're in the forest of writing, I find, the forests you're usually tempted to others are not in the forest of your mind," he said. "Which may be good or bad. Probably both."

According to Calassi, one point of writing fiction is clearly related to the writer's desire "to be disturbed by the passing gaze" of recognizing real people, whom Calassi drew from life — the degree of "verisimilitude is variable" — and then to connect all into the realm of the imaginary by various means.

Asked for his favorite published books about publishing, he named "Another Life," by the former publisher Richard Barbo, A. Dana Burch biography of the editor Maxwell Perkins, and "The Bookman," a memoir by Bennett Cerf, one of the founders of Random House. All three books, he said, are "filled with the wonderful moments of meeting writers." In narrating the same period about fiction, Calassi joined both a publisher's life and business, using the opportunity to describe "Death and Mr. Pickwick," by Stephen Barbo, a novel B.S. Co. is publishing this month about the story behind the writing of Calassi's "The Pickwick Papers."

- ▶ And in the latest New York Times Book Review, in a piece about *Muse*, Jonathan mentions *Death and Mr. Pickwick*.
- ▶ You can read articles about Jonathan and Dan at these websites:
- ▶ http://www.pw.org/con.../agents_editors_gampa_jonathan_galassi
- ▶ <http://www.theguardian.com/.../.../14/dan-franklin-jonathan-cape>



- I met Jonathan and Dan at the Garrick Club in London for lunch last year, along with my agent Christopher Sinclair-Stevenson. It was a most appropriate place to meet, not only because Dickens was a member of the club, but also because the club houses the largest collection of theatrical drawings and paintings in the world, including—



- ...this 1819 portrait of a key character in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, Joseph Grimaldi, shown here without his clown make-up.

June 18



- ▶ Peter Stadlers now posts about two Seymour pictures featuring laughing gas!
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we hear about Robert Seymour's satirical print *Living Made Easy: Prescription for Scolding Wives*. It dramatizes the balance of power by introducing the issue of gender. A thinly disguised metaphor for male sexual prowess, laughing gas is portrayed as a sedative. In the central grouping the husband stands astride his seated wife. Holding the back of her neck in a vice-like grip, his leg separating her legs, he forces the inflated bag of gas into her mouth as she tips backwards, eyes bulging and hands wringing in horror. In the background a petrified husband, his bag deflated, gestures toward his wife, who sits in a chair facing a wall, giddy with laughter and, apparently, sedated. The prospect of using nitrous oxide to subdue "shrewish" women appealed to some Victorian male sensibilities.



- ▶ "Laughing gas parties aren't new, by the way. They were initially arranged for the British upper class in the 1790s. One promotional flier for such a party in 1845 promised: 'The gas will be administered only to gentlemen of the first respectability. The object is to make the entertainment in every respect a genteel affair.' It also quoted the English Romantic poet Robert Southey as saying 'The atmosphere of the highest of all possible heavens must be composed of this gas.' This Seymour illustration shows a group of poets carousing and composing verse under the influence of laughing gas."

June 18



- ▶ Frank Bouchier-Hayes has found a link to a great page on the history of clowns:
- ▶ <http://www.clownbluey.co.uk/more-info/clown-history>
- ▶ It mentions Joseph Grimaldi, shown left.

June 18



How did they, for sake a tomb in Romeo and Juliet -
Bloggins Shakespeare

Friends and I did create a tomb with a tomb - namely the tombstone in all
Juliet's scenes were placed in scenes where Juliet is taken from the scene to be
BLOGGINS-SHAKESPEARE.COM

- ▶ One of Seymour's Shakespeare-inspired drawings featured "Mangled Tybalt in his shroud." Peter Stadlera has found this website showing how the tomb in which the mangled Tybalt lay could be recreated on stage in Shakespeare's time:
- ▶ <http://bloggingshakespeare.com/how-did-they-create-a-tomb-in-romeo-and-juliet>

June 18



THE DREAMING.

- And Peter has now posted some more pictures from *The Economist* and *General Adviser* - they are unsigned, but may well have been created by Seymour.



THE GIN SHOP.



THE GARDEN.



THE SLEIGH-BAG.



THE NIGHT-MARE.

June 18



- Peter Stadlera again: "Let's have a look now at Mr Pickwick's "sidelock" Samuel Weller, a bootblack by profession.



- "The bootblack - in bygone days - was found on every street corner. Each man had a large tin kettle for removing mud, two or three brushes and a very old wig - the latter being indispensable in a shoeblack outfit, as it was very useful for whisking away dust and wiping off wet mud.



London Chronicle
THE BOOT-BLACK

- "The Independent Bootblack must always carry his box on his shoulders and only put it down when he has secured a customer.



- ▶ "In the Gallery of Comicalities we read about the most famous one:
- ▶ SAM WELLER'S ADVENTURES!
- ▶ A SONG OF THE PICKWICKIANS.
Who caus'd the smiles of rich and poor?
Who made a hit so slow, but sure?
And rose the worth of literature?—Sam Weller.
- ▶ I'm pretty well known about town,
For to gain a repute is my pride,
Though no run can doubt my renown,
I'm a covey of polish beard!
I renovates cases for feet,
Whether high lows or tops is the same,
I turns 'em off hand werry neat,
And Samivel Weller's my name!—Fol lol,
&c.



- "In the Borough my trade I dragged on,
With no run to envy my sphere;
I polish'd the soles of each don,
From the cadger bang up to the peer!
Their understandings I greatly improv'd,
Not happen'd to fall in the way;
And many a gentleman mov'd
To me in the course of the day.—Fol lol,
Bc.
Run gentleman—Pickwick, Esquire,
The head of the noted R.C.
Run day tumbled in to enquire,
If I'd had the fortun to see
A cove wearing Yellington kicks,
And a Miss Rachel Vardle beude,
Not the gent had lugged off by the ricks,
And promis'd to make her his brde.—Fol
lol, Bc."

June 18

Stephen Jarvis Makes a Dickensian Debut With "Death and Mr. Pickwick"

By Stephen Jarvis, author of "Death and Mr. Pickwick" and "The Pickwick Papers"



- ▶ An article about Death and Mr Pickwick has just been published in The Wall Street Journal:
- ▶ <http://www.wsj.com/articles/stephen-jarvis-makes-a-dickensian-debut-with-death-and-mr-pickwick-1434626868>



- The article quotes the Dickens expert Michael Slater, who claims that my novel misses the point, because the success of *Pickwick* didn't happen until after Sam Weller appeared, and the book was illustrated by Phiz, and that therefore the success of *Pickwick* had nothing to do with Seymour. Alas, I am afraid it is Michael who misses the point. As I show in the novel, the indications are that Seymour DID have a hand in the creation of Sam Weller, and although Seymour died, the crucial point is that the characters he created were continued by Phiz. You simply cannot separate the success of *Pickwick* from Robert Seymour.

June 19

Prosper and Mr Pickwick

Two great little men

and the rest of the story

by Prosper

11 likes 10 comments



- ▶ As we are now commemorating the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo, I was delighted to receive this article from Nina Martyns, which compares Napoleon to Mr Pickwick:
- ▶ http://www.economist.com/blogs/prospero/2015/08/napoleon-and-mr-pickwick_0
- ▶ Howedays, newspaper articles which use The Pickwick Papers to form an analogy with current events are rare, but in the heyday of Pickwick they were very common. In particular, the Flat Boys phrase "I want to make your flesh creep," was frequently used when dismissing an opponent's arguments as scare-mongering.
- ▶ I have said before that the sleeping giant of Pickwick just needs a nudge to be roused from his slumbers - and if that happens, you can expect to see many more articles which draw upon The Pickwick Papers to make a point.

June 19



a review of *Death and Mr. Pickwick: A Novel*

A MASTERWORK OF A NOVEL. Susan Lawrence in *Death and Mr. Pickwick: Creation 1881* + page masterpiece of a novel incorporating an enormous amount of research and history into a thoroughly readable. thoughtproviding.blogspot.com

- ▶ Mark Amore has just posted a review of *Death and Mr. Pickwick* on the Goodreads website which describes the book as “a masterwork of a novel”. Thank you Mark!
- ▶ <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show/1291569898>

June 19



- ▶ Peter Stadlera has now posted some pictures by Seymour, from the series *New Readings of Old Authors*.



CHILDREN OF THE STREETS

"English John"

Boy John 1881 No. 1



"Wonderful one, that man is certainly a wizard!"



"Take off the hat of your..."

June 20



- ▶ Until about 1930, *The Pickwick Papers* made Goswell Street in Islington, London - where Mr Pickwick lived - the most famous street in the world. Alas, there is no Goswell Street any more, but there is a lengthened version, Goswell Road, and the other day I went on a scientific and cultural expedition along the road with Death and Mr Pickwick fan Ben Shires. We met in an excellent hostelry, The Old Ivy House - this seemed a most appropriate place to begin our research, as ivy appears as a symbol of death in *The Pickwick Papers*, in the song *The Ivy Green*.



- Note too the skull-themed cushions beside me.



- ▶ We conducted further investigations a few doors along at Kennedy's fish and chip restaurant (check out their website <http://www.kennedyslondon.co.uk/>) - the food is fantastic, and there was a brilliant lunchtime deal, which included a bottle of wine. A contemplative state was induced in my consciousness by the combination of sauvignon blanc and battered haddock, and I remarked to Ben that this establishment, which is nearly 150 years old, must have served loyal nineteenth-century Pickwickians, who had embarked on a similar field trip to ourselves.



Nº 1



- We said farewell to Goswell Road, but continued our research at...



- ...the wonderfully-named Blacksmith and Toffeemaker. Although this noble institution does not appear in *The Pickwick Papers*...



- ...with a name like that one can only say it should have done.



- We paid our respects at Liverpool Road where Robert Seymour, alas, ended his life (in the section known in his day as Park Place West).



- Then we headed towards Islington Upper Street where, at The Steam Passage, further profound conversation took place before we said our goodbyes.

June 20

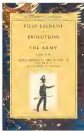


'Death and Mr. Pickwick' is novel rich enough for Dickens to steal Much like Mr. Pickwick the shape of Stephen Jay's novel is round, full and up the number off on long tangents. It is a novel that is right away. This book

Copyright © 2011 by Stephen Jay's

- ▶ Frank Bouchier-Hayes has found this great new review of *Death and Mr. Pickwick*:
- ▶ <http://www.jsonline.com/entertainment/books/death-and-mr-pickwick-a-novel-rich-enough-for-dickens-to-steal-b99517749z1-308446411.html>

June 20



- Peter Stadlera: "In *Deoth and Mr Pickwick* we read about *Field Exercise and Evolutions of the Army* by Sir Henry Torrens. Let's have a brief look at the book, the revised 1824 edition of the standard manual of British army exercises.



- ▶ "Major General Sir Henry Torrens had the recent experiences of the Napoleonic Wars firmly in mind when he undertook the revision of the rules. The resulting handbook was then distributed to all officers to be 'strictly adhered to, without any deviation whatsoever'. Part One of the book is divided into three sections: the first deals with open order exercises without arms, and covers parading, stepping out, marching etc; the second deals with close order marching; and the third, exercising with arms. Part II concerns company manoeuvres; and Part III with those of a battalion. Part IV details the rules of light infantry formations, and Part V with those of a brigade. The book is accompanied by a series of fascinating diagrams illustrating the exercises and manoeuvres described."

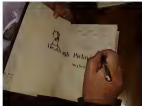
June 21



- ▶ Announcing...
- ▶ *****THE GREAT DEATH AND MR PICKWICK COMPETITION!*****
- ▶ To celebrate the American publication of *Death and Mr Pickwick* next week, on June 23, here's your chance to win a signed copy of the American edition of the novel, bearing a quote and dated on the very day of publication.



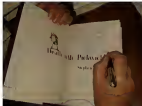
- The idea for this competition came to me yesterday, after I had posted photos of my pub crawl - ahem, *scientific expedition* - with Ben Shires. There will be four signed copies up for grabs. Please send me photos in one of four categories:



- ▶ 1) A photographic record of a pub/restaurant crawl, or other scenes involving eating and drinking. Each photo taken must show Death and Mr Pickwick.
- ▶ 2) A photo of Death and Mr Pickwick in an unusual, interesting or exotic location.
- ▶ 3) A photo of Death and Mr Pickwick in some location which has relevance to either *The Pickwick Papers* or *Death and Mr Pickwick*, or which features a piece of Pickwickiana or DeathandMrPickwick-tana.
- ▶ 4) The 'art' category - anything goes, as long as the photo features Death and Mr Pickwick. So there can be photoshopping, photographic distortion, peculiar objects in the background, unusual activities involving yourself etc. Even videos with musical or spoken word accompaniment will be acceptable. Use your imagination!



- Please send your entries to deathandmrpickwick@outlook.com
Photos must NOT involve any danger to yourself or others and must not break the law. Keep it safe, keep it legal! Your photos can feature either the UK or American edition of the book.



- ▶ And although the main prizes will be the signed copies of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, awarded to the photos I judge to be the best in each category, other prizes may be awarded to noteworthy entries, at my discretion.
- ▶ The closing date for submission of entries will be one month after American publication, on July 23.

June 21

"Death and Mr. Pickwick, A Novel" by Stephen Jayvis—
Defining an Age



- ▶ Peter Stadlera has just found this review of *Death and Mr Pickwick*:
- ▶ <http://reviewsbyamoslassen.com/?p=38464>

June 22



Stephen Jarvis | Kirkus

KirkusReviews talks to Stephen Jarvis about his debut novel, *Good and Mr. Polanski*.

www.kirkusreviews.com

- ▶ On the eve of American publication, here is an interview with me which has just appeared in the influential literary magazine *Kirkus*:
- ▶ https://www.kirkusreviews.com/features/stephen-jarvis/#continue_reading_postme

June 22



- ▶ ****MAJOR NEWS****
- ▶ Sir Pelzi becomes the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* cat!



- ▶ Here is Sir Pelzi commenting on his new role:
- ▶ "Good evening dear *Death and Mr Pickwick* fans and readers, this is Sir Pelzi writing. As Stephen recommended me for the position of the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* cat, I see it as a great honour. I posed today beside my favourite novel. No it isn't too extensive, it's pleasure with a bite for the literature-toothed of every generation (not only fellow cats). Every chapter is a mouth watering lecture, a good (r)eat(d). Yes, I stand in wonder of this book! Best wishes to all, Sir Pelzi"

June 22



- ▶ Here is a very enthusiastic response to *Death and Mr Pickwick* by Angela O'Neill-Mallon:
- ▶ "Guys and gals!! This is my read of the year so far... I could not put it down... It may seem to be, from the title, something dry and historical... far from it!! It blows a massive hole through everything we think/ believe about Charles Dickens... Currently sitting at number 1 in the *Evening Standard* book charts and being launched in the USA this week, so I am not the only one who thinks it is good stuff!! Get yourselves off to *Waterstones!!!!*"

June 22



- ▶ My friend Gary has just sent me a copy of the *Evening Standard*, showing that *Death and Mr Pickwick* is still at No 1 in the London bestselling fiction chart. I once made Gary a cup of tea...and unfortunately I forgot to remove the teabag. This photo recreates the moments leading up to the spluttering.

June 22



- Peter Stadlera has just posted about *The Arabian Nights*, which was a great influence on Dickens. It is an absolutely wonderful collection of stories. Indeed, it was the book I most enjoyed reading when I was working my way through all the works of literature that influenced *The Pickwick Papers*.



► Over to Peter:

- "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about *The Arabian Nights* in 6 volumes. In Britain, the stories of *One Thousand and One Nights* - or *The Arabian Nights*, as the work had also become known after the first anonymous English translation of 1706 - were an example of the concurrent scholarly preoccupation with 'Arabia' and the simple desire for good stories. The tales with which Scheherazade entertains the Persian King Shahryar to postpone her pending execution - including those of Aladdin, Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, and Sinbad the Sailor - were incredibly popular with 19th-century readers.



- "They offered fantastic characters (giants, mermaids, talking serpents and trees), curious tools (magic carpets and lamps) and a wide range of narrative genres (horror, crime, fantasy and even science fiction). For Romantic and Victorian writers like Coleridge, de Quincey, Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, Collins, Gaskell and Conan Doyle, *The Arabian Nights* thus stood for the wonderful against the mundane, and the imaginative against the prosaic and rational. On the other hand, the stories referenced real people and real geography: many readers were thus led to believe that *Scheherazade's* tales actually gave a faithful account of the Orient.



- "There was even an opera, *Aladdin* - the "fairy opera" written by George Scane with music by Henry Rowley Bishop - that was first produced in April 1826 at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London. The production, though, was not successful; in fact, after a year in preparation and months of intense puffery, it failed miserably. As far as I can tell, it had only ten performances."

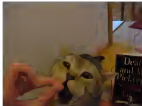
June 22



- Sir Pelzi, the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* cat, sends his greetings to us again...



- "Dear *Death and Mr Pickwick* Community, Dear Stephen, this is my song of joy for being nominated the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* cat. Yes Stephen, I raise both my paws for this honour.



- ▶ "And well, I like a tasty titbit, not only of literature. Have a nice time and success be with you.
- ▶ Yours faithfully
- ▶ Sir Pelzi"

June 22



- We now also have an official *Death and Mr Pickwick* parrot: the beautiful Dorian Gray Parrot, aka Dory, who is owned by Michael Segers. Here, Dory is shown enjoying a celebratory "cookie bath" (as he calls apple juice).

June 23



- ▶ Well here it is - PUBLICATION DAY OF *DEATH AND MR PICKWICK* IN THE USA!!!!
- ▶ A month ago, as the 'fanfare' for the publication of the UK edition, I chose Leo Sayer's song *The Show Must Go On*, because of its 'sad clown' motif. As the companion-piece to that, here is the version of the song which is more famous in the USA...*The Show Must Go On* by Three Dog Night.
- ▶ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xLAzo_pqys

June 24



- Yesterday was a big day of celebration, as *Death and Mr Pickwick* finally went global, with publication taking place in the USA. Here I am having a little light celebratory lunch at our local coaching inn, The Bear. (I washed this morsel down with pints of Devil's Backbone - an American beer, of course.)



- But also, earlier in the day, I signed copies of the American edition. The quote I have added here - "Pickwick is not a novel, but a universe" - is probably my favourite description of *The Pickwick Papers*.



- Here, the quote I have added is: "Most books are simply books. Not *Pickwick*." It refers to the fact that the pleasures of *The Pickwick Papers* do not end when you reach the last page - the book inspires so many other things: historical research, pictures, visits to pubs, etc. I wanted *Death and Mr Pickwick* to have the same rich potential.

June 24



- ▶ Peter Stadlera continues to find great material relating to *Death and Mr Pickwick*:
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read of an engraving showing the 'King of Beggars'. But who was this chap, the kind reader will ask himself? There may have been several contenders for the title, but here is one - a former Royal Navy sailor, Billy Waters, who lost his leg falling from the topsail yardarm of the ship "Gaïymede". Following this accident he supplemented his meagre pension by busking and begging - particularly outside the nearby Drury Lane Theatre - in order to support his wife and two children in the London parish of St Giles.



- ▶ "He was one of several black beggars and street entertainers in early 19th-century London who were immortalised in art and literature.

[illegible]

- "He was noted for his peg-leg and feathered hat, and is instantly recognisable in a print by George Cruikshank published in *Pierce Egan's Life in London* (1821). This book was adapted as an operatic extravaganza by W. T. Moncrieff that was performed at the Adelphi Theatre in 1821. It included the character of Billy Waters.



St Giles and St George's workhouse interior, 1898

- ▶ "He, however, gained nothing from the publicity and died in the St Giles workhouse in 1823 at the age of 45. He had reputedly been elected 'King of the Beggars' shortly before his death and was buried in the New Burial Ground, St Pancras church."

June 24



- ▶ Here is my 'photo essay' *Robert Seymour - 13 Pictures*, which I produced for the blog of Powell's Bookstore, in the USA.



- ▶ 1. Self-Portrait. My new novel, *Death and Mr. Pickwick*, tells the story of the origins of Charles Dickens's first novel, *The Pickwick Papers*. Its main character is Dickens's tragic illustrator Robert Seymour, who shot himself while working on the pictures for *Pickwick*. Something of Seymour's troubled state of mind is surely conveyed in this self-portrait, with its strange, haunted expression.



- ▶ 2. *Better Luck Next Time*. It would be easy to say, after seeing Seymour's picture *Better Luck Next Time*, that the artist had longstanding thoughts of suicide. However, the failed suicide attempt portrayed here seems to be an impulsive act, almost a whim: a man who is rejected by a woman decides to hang himself, but is saved when the rope breaks. This is very different from Seymour's planning of his own suicide, which included writing a suicide note and making certain that he would not be disturbed in the act.
- ▶ Also, the method he chose — firing a fowling gun at his own heart — left no possibility of survival. If *Better Luck Next Time* reflected Seymour's state of mind, then he had thoughts of suicide some years before his death, but there was not the firm determination then to actually carry out the act.



- ▶ 3. Lord Jeffrey. Seymour was the most prolific political cartoonist of his era — he drew literally thousands of cartoons and was dubbed “The Shakespeare of Caricature.” Here he portrays the Scottish politician Lord Jeffrey, who was known for his strict morality, and who preached on the effects of “unco gude living” - Scottish dialect for exceptionally good living, or a morally correct existence. Seymour interprets “good living” in another sense — and shows its effect upon Jeffrey’s waistline.



- ▶ 4. John Bull's Nightmare. Seymour was so prolific that it is estimated he drew one-third of all the British political cartoons of his era, a phenomenal rate of output, twice as productive as his nearest rival. Here, he portrays the state of England as a man's nightmare, with the demon of national debt sitting on John Bull's chest.



- **5. The March of Intellect.** Sometimes, Seymour's pictures seem futuristic. Here, he shows the forces of progress as a gigantic robot, sweeping away medical quacks, unreformed vicars, and dishonest lawyers – the dust and garbage to be cleansed by society's advance.



- ▶ 6. Shaving by Steam. Seymour frequently portrayed the downside of technological advances. In this picture, he shows a steam-powered shaving machine – which cuts off a man's nose.



- ▶ 7. **Sleeping Angler.** Robert Seymour was a keen fisherman, and many of his pictures portray the misadventures of anglers.



- 8. *Pickwick Papers* Wrapper. The theme of the sleeping angler is used again on the wrapper for the original serial-parts issue of *The Pickwick Papers*. At the bottom of the wrapper, Mr. Pickwick is shown angling in a punt moored near Putney Bridge in London — he is a “Putney puntite,” one of a notorious group of anglers whose main concern was eating, drinking, and smoking.



- 9. Cockney Sportsman. In Seymour's time, the word "cockney" meant a pretentious, affected person — and so a cockney sportsman was a lower-class fellow who tried to imitate the hunting pursuits of a country gentleman. Mr. Winkle in *The Pickwick Papers* is an example of this type of character.



- ▶ 10. Norfolk Coach at Christmas. Some of Seymour's finest work appears in *The Book of Christmas* (1835). Here, he shows a coach from Norfolk, loaded with turkeys, heading for London.



- ▶ 11. **Mr. Pickwick Addresses the Club.** Seymour's most famous picture – indeed, for almost a century, it was the most famous book illustration in the world, and has even been called the *Mona Lisa* of book illustrations.



- ▶ 12. The Dying Clown. Seymour's last picture for *The Pickwick Papers*. A few days after completing this picture, the artist lay dead in his garden, his heart literally torn to pieces by the gunshot.



- ▶ 13. Robert Seymour's Tombstone. In 2005, I found Robert Seymour's tombstone lying abandoned in a church crypt in Islington, London. In 2010, I finally secured the permission from the church authorities to move the tombstone to the Dickens Museum in London, where it may be seen today, along with a commemorative plaque.

June 24



- ▶ Peter Stadler continues his investigations into *Death and Mr Pickwick*...
- ▶ "In the novel we come across Charles Mathews, (born June 28, 1776, London, died June 28, 1835, Plymouth, Devon).



- "He was a prominent English stage personality and theatre manager who, renowned for his genius at mimicry and for his wit, was among the leading comedians of his day."



- "The character of Alfred Jingle in *The Pickwick Papers*, is said to have been inspired by Mathews. In Mathews' *At Home or London Gleonings*, is Commodore Cosmogony, a traveller with as exhaustless a fund of stories as Jingle.



"Other characters were Lawyer Muzzle, a walking digest of statutes at large, and Major Longbow, who is show here. *At Home* was performed with the most distinguished success at the English Opera House, 'including all the laughable tales, anecdotes, and original comic songs'."



June 24

and Mr. Pickwick A Novel Stephen

'Death and Mr. Pickwick' asks if Dickens stole his famous first novel

Stephen Jarvis' book explores whether 'The Pickwick Papers' was really conceived by its distributor

WASHINGTONPOST.COM

- ▶ Here is a review of *Death and Mr. Pickwick* which appeared in yesterday's *Washington Post*.
- ▶ Although the reviewer says some nice things, I have to say that I do not agree with all of her comments, particularly concerning my indictment of Dickens. She says, "The trouble is, this is supposed to be a novel, and the excruciating detail of the indictment is more appropriate to a scholarly monograph." The indictment of Dickens, with its supposedly "excruciating" detail, is a minuscule fraction of the total book, and it **HAD** to be there. If I hadn't included it, reviewers would have said things like "Jarvis fails to skewer Dickens." Also, I think the unmaking of Dickens's life has a drama of its own.
- ▶ https://www.washingtonpost.com/entertainment/books/death-and-mr-pickwick-asks-if-dickens-stole-his-famous-first-novel/2019/06/22/4ee8199e-1375-11ea-b9f3-614b0da94eb1_story.html

June 24



- Here is my friend Jamie Johnston at The George Inn in Southwark. Although The George is not directly referred to in *The Pickwick Papers*, there are mentions of old inns in the area, and no doubt Dickens had The George in mind as one of them.



- And as Jamie's photo shows, Dickens mentioned The George in *Little Dorrit*.

June 24



Death Unravels The Secret History Of Mr. Pickwick

Stephen Jaffe's latest novel explores the deaths of Charles Dickens' classic serial "Pickwick" when he was an unknown writer going by the name of "Boz," and the real-life man (author Robert Seymour)

WFS 1002

- ▶ Here is the latest review:
- ▶ <http://www.npr.org/2015/06/24/416516125/death-unravels-the-secret-history-of-mr-pickwick>

June 24



- ▶ Here are my friends Ant and Beth Abbott. I used to work with Ant at Access Storage, Kings Cross, London before he moved to the USA. Strangely enough, when I met Ant I discovered that he was very familiar with Liverpool Road in Islington, London, where Robert Seymour shot himself.
- ▶

June 25



Pickwick Poltergeist: Liverpool Ghost Described As 'Violent Spirit' Dwells In House Up For Rent

- ▶ One of the legacies of *The Pickwick Papers*' colossal success is that there are places around the world which are called 'Pickwick' including many roads and streets, and even entire towns. A google alert on 'Pickwick' will therefore pick up news stories about these locations, and although for the most part the news is of little interest to anyone beyond the residents, the story below is an exception.
<http://www.inquisitr.com/2180575/pickwick-poltergeist-liverpool-ghost-described-as-violent-spirit-dwells-in-home-up-for-rent/>

June 25



Arena Monday 22 June 2015 - Arena With Sean Roda - RTE Radio 1

on Tuesday's show - the announcement of "Four Colours" images with Colin Farrell (see below) - and then as guest on the topic "Death & Mr Pickwick"

- ▶ Frank Bouchier-Hayes heard this radio programme where *Death and Mr Pickwick* is discussed. You can listen to the segment discussing the book by clicking on the Tuesday show, and then go to the *Death and Mr Pickwick* link. The reporter says some nice things, but I disagree with some of his conclusions.

- ▶ <http://www.rte.ie/radio1/arena/programmes/2015/0623/710039-arena-tuesday-23-june-2015/?clipid=1913537#1913537>

June 25



- ▶ Peter Stadlera continues his investigations into the historical background to *Death and Mr Pickwick*:
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about Shakespeare, *Dramatic Works by Singer and Life by C. Symmons* 10 Vol. Chisw. 1826. For those interested, I have collected some further facts: Samuel Weller Singer (1783-1858) was an English author and scholar on the work of William Shakespeare. He is also now remembered as a pioneer historian of card games.



Old English Card

- "His most interesting original compilation was his *Researches into the History of Playing Cards; with Illustrations of the Origin of Printing and Engroving on Wood* (1816). Only two hundred and fifty copies were printed.



- "The beauty of the engravings added greatly to the work's value and interest."



- ▶ "Another popular venture was an edition of Shakespeare in ten volumes, which Singer undertook for Whittingham.



- "It was issued by the Chiswick Press in 1826. Singer was responsible for a careful collation of the text and many useful notes. A life of the poet was contributed by Dr. Charles Symmons, and there were wood engravings after the designs of Stothard and others. The edition was frequently republished, and won a considerable reputation in America. A reissue in 1856 included a series of critical essays by Singer's friend, W. Watkiss Lloyd.



- "Singer proved his skill as a textual critic by preparing the earliest attack on the genuineness of Collier's manuscript corrections in the so-called Perkins folio. The work appeared in 1853 as *The Text of Shakespeare vindicated from the Interpolations and Corruptions advocated by J. R. Collier in his Notes and Emendations.*"

June 25



- ▶ Here is another fantastic post by Peter Stadlers. The thing about *The Pickwick Papers* and *Death and Mr Pickwick* is that both books are tied inextricably to places: there are many real locations corresponding to the locations in the text. Peter has now tracked down the whereabouts of a church mentioned in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, but which unfortunately no longer survives. However, as Peter shows, this does not mean that there is nothing to see.
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about 'St Michael's' in Crooked Lane. But where were church and street actually located? On taking a stroll through London you won't find either of them. Here are the facts: The parish of St Michael, Crooked Lane was a long thin area just to the west of London Bridge, from the Thames up to Cannon Street. On a modern map you won't find Crooked Lane. You find London Bridge then move north into King William Street. On the west side is a side road, Arthur Street, and about 50 feet along on the north side is where Crooked Lane once was.



- ▶ "The church was demolished in 1831 to make way for the approach to the new London Bridge when it amalgamated with St Magnus the Martyr. However, a stained glass window in the church of St Magnus commemorates the former parish."
- ▶ I love the fact that, although the church is gone, Peter has still found a memento of its former existence.

June 26



Dickens, Book Collectors, and Unusual Leisure

From 19th-century bookshops to new-fights on the Internet, Stephen Larkin shares the singularly unusual genres of his vast, richly imagined Dickensian debut.

www.fsgworkinprogress.com

- ▶ My American publisher, Farrar, Straus & Giroux, asked me to write an essay about *Death and Mr Pickwick*, so here it is. The essay explores how I came to write the novel, and it pulls together some material about my background which I have posted previously on the facebook page.
- ▶ <http://www.fsgworkinprogress.com/2015/06/dickens-brick-collectors-and-unusual-leisure/>

June 26



- ▶ Peter Stadlera now writes about a poet who appears in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, Thomas Campbell. Campbell was well-known in his own time, but is largely forgotten today. But then, *The Pickwick Papers* seems to have contributed to the overall decline of poetry in the UK, and led to many poets being forgotten. Before *Pickwick*, the British public loved verse, and Byron in particular was adored. After *Pickwick*, prose was the thing. Over to Peter:
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about *Specimens of British Poetry* and wonder what this book is all about and who wrote it.



- "Here are some enlightening facts: Thomas Campbell (1777-1844) was a Scottish poet chiefly remembered for his sentimental poetry dealing specially with human affairs.



- "In 1799, he wrote *The Pleasures of Hope*, a traditional 18th century survey in heroic couplets. He also produced several stirring patriotic war songs: *Ye Mariners of England*, *The Soldier's Dream*, *Hohenlinden* and in 1801, *The Battle of Mad and Strange Turkish Princes*.



- "From 1814 on, he continued to occupy himself with his *Specimens of the British Poets*, the design of which had been projected years before. The work was published in 1819. It contains on the whole an admirable selection, with short lives of the poets, and prefixed to it an essay on poetry containing much valuable criticism. The anthology itself contains works by Fletcher, Moore, Phillips and many others. Throughout his life Campbell was plagued by fears that he would not live up to his early poetic achievements. He was also lacked organisational skills and wrote slowly."

June 26



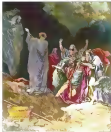
- ▶ And here is another great post by Peter Stadlera, on the Witch of Endor:
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we come across 'The Witch of Endor'. This might bring to mind *Star Wars*, and the battle of Endor in *Return of the Jedi*. But no - this supernatural tale is 'down to earth'...



- "It is one of the most fascinating, but least mentioned stories in the Bible - King Saul and the Witch of Endor.



- ▶ "The Witch of Endor, in the Old Testament (1 Samuel 28:3-25), is a female sorcerer who was visited by Saul, the first king of Israel. Although Saul had banished all sorcerers and conjurers from his kingdom, his concern about the final outcome of Israel's battle against the Philistines caused him to seek the services of someone with "a familiar spirit." When his servants told him of such a woman at Endor, he disguised himself and visited her that night. He asked her to conjure up the spirit of the prophet Samuel to tell his fortunes. When the woman reminded him of the law against practising her art, he assured her that she would be protected. The woman accordingly conjured up a spirit identified by Saul as Samuel. The spirit informed Saul that he and his three sons would die in battle the next day and that the Israelites would fall to the Philistines.



- "The spectre of the prophet Samuel rising from the ground to confront the king has to be one of the creepiest scenes in all literature. It is not surprising that the Witch of Endor appeared in nineteenth-century magic lantern shows. The hand-coloured slide on the left, from a show featuring the Witch of Endor, is by Doré , whose illustrations were used in many magic lantern shows."²²

June 26



- And here is Peter Stadler with Sir Pelzi, enjoying some conversation about *Death* and *Mr Pickwick*.

June 26



The Reason Cervantes Asked To Be Buried Under A Convent

Experts have confirmed the bones under a Madrid convent belong to Spain's most famous writer. And wanted to be buried there because the church offered stability.

A PR | BY A. TORRES CORREIA

- ▶ Michael Segers has posted this about Cervantes. *Don Quixote* was of course an important influence on *The Pickwick Papers*.
- ▶ <http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2015/06/24/417117826/the-reason-cervantes-asked-to-be-buried-under-a-convent?sc=tw>

June 26



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Dickens' Originality or Seymour's?
- CounterPunch Tells the Facts,
Names the Names

Before: Originally on Seymour's!

counterpunch.org

- ▶ And here's the latest *Death and Mr Pickwick* review:
- ▶ <http://www.counterpunch.org/2015/06/26/dickens-originality-or-seymours/>

June 26



- Peter Stadlera now returns to the topic of Pierce Egan. In particular, he mentions Egan's character Sir John Blubber. When I wrote the novel, I mentioned the boxer Fat Hudson, who appears in a portrait on the wall of the Daffy Club. I didn't know it at the time, but I was informed by Alex Joanides (who is an expert on nineteenth-century boxing) that Sir John Blubber was actually based on Hudson.



- Peter Stadlera: "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read of 'Sir John Blubber, retired from business, and radiating benevolence'. I've found a picture of Tom and Jerry playing a match of rackets against Blubber.



- "In the nineteenth century, as popular publishing flourished, so as to entertain the rapidly growing, and increasingly literate, urban working classes, the fast-expanding city of London was a frequent setting for lurid low-life tales such as Pierce Egan's *Life in London*, a monthly publication, starting in July 1821, costing a shilling.



- ▶ "Subtitled *The day and night scenes of Jerry Hawthorn, Esq. and his elegant friend Corinthian Tom in their rambles and sprees through the metropolis*, it followed the high- and low-life adventures of three young men: Tom, wealthy, confident and tasteful; Jerry, son of a country squire; and Bob Logic, a friend of Tom's from Oxford who was more in search of a good time than education.



- "The series was an instant success and spawned many imitations and even several plays. In 1829 Egan wrote this sequel, evidently to finish off his comic creations once and for all. The fact that *Life in London* was being reprinted in 1871 shows how enduring his characters were."

June 26



- ▶ Here's the latest news of Dory, the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* parrot. Over to Michael Segers:
- ▶ "I had a request for a video of Dory talking. This morning, he was getting quite vocal on the screened porch, especially calling 'Lady-Girl', his cat friend, who can be seen in the window of her cat-house, behind the fern (although she spends most of her time in our house). I went out to capture his eloquence, but in several minutes I only got a whistle or two. I turned to go back into the house, and he called out, 'You need to come out here, darling.'"

June 26



- Cynthia St. John, from San Francisco, is a great fan of *Death and Mr Pickwick* who works at Kepler's Books. She has just sent me this pic from the store. Many thanks Cynthia!

June 26



- Peter Stadler: "In *Death and Air Pickwick* we are informed that the marriage of Charles Dickens and Catherine Hogarth took place in St Luke's, Chelsea.





Catherine Dickens

- "Dickens met Catherine Hogarth, who was the eldest daughter of George and Georgina Hogarth, in 1834. Catherine was born in Scotland, but in 1834 she and her family moved to England where her father had taken a job as a music critic for the *Morning Chronicle*. In 1835 she and Dickens became engaged. They were married on April 2 1836, two days after the publication of the first part of *The Pickwick Papers*. In January 1837 the first of their ten children was born."

June 27



- Now why have I posted a picture of Gwen Stefani? Well...



- In *Death and Mr Pickwick*, Dickens meets his future biographer John Forster, at a party where there is an 'expensively cologned host'. Although the host is unidentified, he was the writer Harrison Ainsworth, but I cut out his role in the final version of the manuscript. Earlier in the text, though...



- ...there is a brief mention of an unnamed book by Ainsworth, reprinted in an edition which took 'the bold move of including twelve pictures by George Cruikshank to add life'. The book was actually *Rookwood*, Ainsworth's re-telling of the life of the highwayman Dick Turpin.



- ▶ *Rookwood* was enormously successful, and indeed was responsible for creating many aspects of the legend of Turpin which are still around today.

ADAM AND THE ANTS



- The 1981 song *Stand and Deliver* by Adam and the Ants can indeed be considered part of Ainsworth's legacy.



- ▶ But it so happens that the band No Doubt, fronted by Gwen Stefani, covered *Stand and Deliver* in 2009, and you can watch a live performance of that song on youtube here:
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OdBmyfCRTzs>
- ▶ when No Doubt were joined on stage by Katy Perry. So that's why I have posted the picture of Gwen Stefani.
- ▶ (Even so, my utterance of 'Phwoarrnrrlllll' might be imagined...)

June 28



- I recently discovered that a book with pictures by Seymour, *Journal of a Landsman from Portsmouth to Lisbon*, is available as an e-flipbook - the first time I have seen his work in such a form.



- The *Journal*, featuring hand-painted images, is quite rare, and a copy was auctioned in 2011 for £3055 (\$4960).



- It shows life on board a ship bound for Portugal, and one wonders whether Seymour was himself a passenger on such a ship. As you can see, the indignities suffered by passengers have something in common with the land-based misadventures which Seymour liked to portray.



- To see the flip book, go to:
- <http://purl.pt/23392/3/#/0>

June 28



- ▶ Michael Segers, who owns Dory, the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* parrot, has just posted this about birds in *Death and Mr Pickwick*:
- ▶ "Someone asked me, since my friend on my shoulder is the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* parrot, just what parrots have to do with that novel. One of the advantages of reading the ebook is that, as soon as I got the book, I found that the word parrot occurs one time - and it is no big deal. But, there are two haunting passages about birds. One, at the beginning, casts the whole life of Robert Seymour (at least for me) as being based on his father's encounter with a magpie. Another is a sad story of a friendship between a man and his bird, not a parrot but a vulture."

June 29



- ▶ Here, we have a video of Sir Peto, the official Death and Mr Pickwick cat, sending a message to us all – Sir Peto Addressing the Death and Mr Pickwick Club
- ▶ <https://www.facebook.com/garthstudiers/videos/63080822257979292915440249115576118/?type=2&theater>
- ▶ And here is Sir Peto sitting beside his cat tree



June 29



Death and Mr. Pickwick

With capricious scholarship, acute moral imagination, and a series of world-class behind-the-scenes stories, "The Pickwick Papers"

[BARNESANDNOBLE.COM](http://www.barnesandnoble.com)

- ▶ The latest review:
- ▶ <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/review/death-and-mr-pickwick>

June 29



- Over the weekend, I used the Docklands Light Railway in London to take me to several locations, where I carried out extensive historical research of a Pickwickian nature.



- Nelson, and the Battle of Trafalgar, are mentioned several times in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, and so it seemed appropriate to visit his local public house, The Gun.





- I must say this pub is magnificent, and of tremendous historical interest - the great admiral used to conduct assignations with Lady Emma Hamilton in an upstairs room.



- ▶ I carried out additional Nelsonian research at the Trafalgar Tavern in Greenwich.

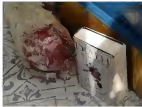




- Then I discovered, in the centre of Greenwich, a shop called The Pickwick Papers - in the heyday of *Pickwick*, many, many businesses called themselves after the novel, and it was nice to see that the practice still survives.



- ▶ A short distance away, at Waterstones, I saw *Death and Mr Pickwick* on sale.

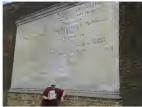


- ▶ A little model of a pig at the door of the establishment called Champagne and Fromage summoned me in, as pigs feature in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, notably in the inset story about Prince Bladud.





- The baked camembert was gooeytastic.



- Then it was time to visit West India Quay. The docks here are mentioned in the inset story of Chunee the elephant, and I write: "Chunee would eat half the sugar in West India docks on buns given half a chance."





- I toasted Chunee's memory in the establishment called The Ledger Building.





- ▶ But thoughts of sugar led me to a restaurant actually called Rum and Sugar. The burger here was out of this world, truly glorious, and the accompanying chips were among the best I have ever had.

- ▶ But by now I was quite tired, and so I headed home - even dedicated historians need a rest. However, I lay the results of my investigations before you now, in the hope that they may please Clio, the Muse of History, and be considered a worthy rival to Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

June 29



- ▶ Peter Szaboni: "In *Death and My Pickwick* we come across 'brummagen-buttons' and wonder what this is all about. Let's find out who's behind that Brummagen term.
- ▶ "Above the picture it says: 'A Royal Brummagen Boy.' It shows George IV standing by the base of a pillar, holding a top hat in his right hand, a glove in his left. He wears his naturalistic wig, and a coat with ribbon and star, and knee breeches, much as in portraits, but is spangled with buttons, large and small. Buttons, arranged to form crowns, ornament the skirts of his coat; and buttons decorate his hat, breeches, and shoes. The *Punch* magazine refers to Brummagen-buttons as a term for counterfeit silver coins. Buttons were famously made in Birmingham, and the town's name could be compared to Brummagen, and Samuel Johnson's 1811 *Dictionary* refers to Brummagen as 'an old-fashioned nickname for a Birmingham-ventricle.' Some people still used it as a general term for anything cheap and shoddy designed in something better. It was used figuratively in this context to refer to moral laxity.



- "In addition to the 'Brummagem Boy' there is even a 'Brummagem Frankenstein': a tiny John Bright maintains his support for suffrage, whilst attempting to scuttle out of the massive shadow of 'the working man'. The implication is that, like Mary Shelley's monster, this menacing worker has been man-made by Mr Frankenstein Bright.
- "The background to this is that a number of reform demonstrations were held during the autumn of 1866. Many thousands of the working-class people attended - perhaps 150,000 at Glasgow, whilst at Birmingham the figure was brought to be as much as 250,000. Mr Bright regularly spoke at these demonstrations. He publicly declared that he had no fear of manhood suffrage. However, it would have been easy to feel nervous in the face of such huge crowds.



- "And this is from *Punch* September 8, 1866. The 'Brummagem Lion' represents the visit of the Prince and Princess of Wales to Birmingham."

June 29



- ▶ Here is a video of Dory, the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* parrot, whistling and mentioning his alter ego Sugar Bird.
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MaThTSum9M8>

June 29



- ▶ Michael Segary has found a mention of *The Pickwick Papers* in another famous novel.
- ▶ "Last year, I finally got around to re-reading and even finishing *Lawrence Durrell's Alexandria Quartet* and used *Picobooks* as a blog of my reading, including this wonderful quote from *Clea*: "which, I suspect, is how Stephen James first decided to notify me about his wonderful novel!"
- ▶ "From a capacious pocket he produced a copy of *The Pickwick Papers*. "Gerald" he said, "I mustn't forget to get this copy replaced. Or the cover will bleed well, try me! It was a sudden, dog-eared little book with a bullet hole in the cover, unashamed with oil. It's our only library, and some bastard must have ripped himself on the middle there. I've sworn to replace it. Actually, there's a copy at the flat. I don't suppose Pamela would mind my sending it. It's absurd. When there isn't any action we're about reading it aloud to one another, under the stars abroad, my dear chap, but then everything is more absurd than and more absurd every day."

June 29



- ▶ Here's another very informative post by Peter Stadlera, about a pub which is mentioned in *Death and Mr Pickwick*:
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about The Black Boy Inn in Chelmsford.



- ▶ "Legend has it that, one day, while entertaining Richard III near Chelmsford, the king went missing from the De Vere party. Panicked, and worried for the fate of that misunderstood monarch, they sent parties out to look for him and it was only after hours of searching that he was found enjoying a drink among his countrymen at the hostelry that would one day become The Black Boy Inn. The supposed room he drank in was still retained in the building for almost another four hundred years.



- "In 1817 the pub became the meeting house of hopeful Tories who began the Pitt Club there, and indeed political meetings continued with the South Essex Conservative Association present in the 1830s. By this time it had been the resting point of men such as George IV and the Duke of Wellington. Even Charles Dickens stayed a little while, and he briefly mentions the pub in *The Pickwick Papers*. By the 1840s Chelmsford was rapidly changing, and in 1842 a station was built to connect the town more readily with the rest of Britain. In the same year, The Black Boy was sold. A post office had by now been built next door, and it was no longer so fashionable for important societies to meet in local pubs.



- ▶ "The inn continued under new ownership for the next fifteen years, but now with a station on the other side of the town and new visitors staying in more modern hotels nearby, The Black Boy stopped being the successful inn that it had been for the previous three hundred years.
- ▶ "The Black Boy was situated at 1 Springfield Road. It has now been demolished and replaced by a retail unit."

June 30



- ▶ Peter Stadlers again:
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about the Gallery of Fine Arts/The Temple of Fancy in Rathbone Place. Here is some background information:
- ▶ "Samuel Williams Fuller (c.1777-1857) and his brother Joseph Carr Fuller (c.1783-1853) advertised the opening of their shop in Rathbone Place in 1809, stating that they had been 'many years with Mr. Edward Orme, New Bond-street', the print dealer and publisher. The two brothers were partners in what became one of the leading print publishing businesses of Regency and early Victorian London, producing a number of print catalogues.



- "Their trade as artists' suppliers was mainly in watercolours and drawing materials. Their trade card, advertising the 'Temple of Fancy', c.1810, focused on the market in genteel products for ladies, while a later three-page leaflet was aimed at male customers. A leaflet, apparently from the *Lady's Magazine*, August 1823, depicted the shop interior, and gives a good idea of the product range."

June 30



- ▶ Truncheons appear on a number of occasions in *Death and Mr Pickwick* - they are in the book's very first scene, where the narrator sees a display of antique truncheons above a hearth, and they appear afterwards as a manifestation of authority, as a phallic symbol, and even as an element in Seymour's very last scribbled drawing.



- The most potent use of a truncheon occurs in the scene where the nightwatchman batters the clown JS Grimaldi, after Grimaldi attempted to turn over the nightwatchman's sentry box, copying the prank which appeared in Pierce Egan's *Life in London*. Egan's scene was famously illustrated by George and Robert Cruikshank, but I recently found this cheap plagiarised version of *Life in London* which...



- ...features the scene drawn by an unknown inferior artist.



- ▶ The character Mr Inbelicate also considers using a walking stick as a truncheon. Not just any old walking stick though: he has a cane with a head shaped like Combe and Rowlandson's character Dr Syntax. And such canes actually existed, as you can see here.





- Indeed, Martin Hulsenboom, the Dutch translator of *Dr Syntax*, tells me that he owns such a cane himself, and, moreover, his is a swordstick version.

June 30



- ▶ Here is Peter Sadlera's latest post:
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about St Martin's Le Grand cabstand... let's have a closer look at this place.
- ▶ "The General Post Office established its new headquarters on the site of the monastic precinct in 1629. From here mail coaches departed for destinations all over the country. Coaches bound for the north went up St. Martin's Le Grand through Aldersgate - the first stage of the Great North Road (now the A1 road) to York and Edinburgh. This replaced the previous starting point at Hicks Hall in Smithfield Market.



- "Hicks Hall was the traditional starting point of the Great North Road, and continued to be used as the initial datum point for mileages on that road long after the building itself had been demolished. Measurements were taken from the building's front, which was approximately in the middle of St John Street ("the High-street of Saint John"), at the point where the much shorter St John's Lane branches off.



- ▶ The Post Office building, a grand Neoclassical design by Robert Smirke, was demolished in 1911, having been replaced by new premises immediately to the west, on the former site of Christ's Hospital school.



July 1



- I was delighted to discover that there is a FULL PAGE AD for *Death and Mr Pickwick* in the New York Times Book Review!

July 1



- ▶ There is a new *Death and Mr Pickwick* video, the fifth, featuring me reading the story of Chunee the elephant. Here it is:
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PfN94h1IRYc>

July 1



► Peter Stadlers now posts about one of the artists who appears in *Death and Mr Pickwick*:

► "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we hear a lot about Thomas Rowlandson. I've chosen two interesting illustrations of him: one of a lady, the other on everyday life in London in 12 vignettes

► "The first one shows one of the 18th Century's most flamboyant (one might say fragrant...) women, Lady Sarah Archer. Boy, was she loved/hated by cartoonists of the day! You cannot get much more vicious than this splendid caricature by Rowlandson, dating from 1792 (when the subject was just over fifty years old). It shows her as a bald-headed old crone, putting in a glass eye, inserting a set of dentures, applying make-up and then appearing (bottom left) as a somewhat younger woman. What had she done to deserve such treatment?



- "This 1790 hand-colored etching by Rowlandson from the Royal Collection Trust depicts 12 vignettes of everyday life and work in Georgian London. Sketches like these offer us a glimpse of ordinary life in the 18th century, much as photos and videos today. These vignettes are drawn from life, and unlike the serious, well-thought out poses of formal portraits, they show people of a bygone era going about their ordinary business."

July 1



- And more from Peter Stadler:
- "In *Death and Mr. Pickwick* we read about the *Five Guide* series, or *The Stranger's Directory*, by William Kidd, which includes this guide to the *Edens of London*. This little book (1822) is available for free on [googlebooks](#) and provides some fine illustrations and information."





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sumed to the country alone"—*Times*

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Gillies, 16, Pall-mall-gate; and sold by
all Booksellers.

July 2



Public Books — Loving Pickwick

The anonymous literary review that directly inspired Queen Victoria's response to the English drama in 1850 is online at the first of four history-themed desktops that accompanied the mobile display of Mary Shelley's

PUBLICBOOKS.ORG

- ▶ Here is the latest review of *Death and Mr Pickwick* - a lengthy piece which is really more of an essay on my novel, rather than a review. SPOILER ALERT: I would strongly advise you to hold back from reading the piece until after you have read *Death and Mr Pickwick*. The reviewer gives away many elements of the plot, which are best kept hidden.
- ▶ <http://www.publicbooks.org/briefs/loving-pickwick>

July 2



The elephant who was shot 152 times

For 17 years Chune was a familiar sight walking along the Street every Sunday. However, suffering from a deadly tumour, Chune's condition was found in February 2001. After a long struggle, it was decided.

WCCART - 02785-028

- ▶ Peter Stadlera has found this site giving background info about Chune the elephant:
- ▶ <http://secret-cities.com/2010/01/05/the-elephant-who-was-shot-152-times/>

July 2



- ▶ More from the great Peter Stadiera:
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we meet a very interesting man: Henry Mayhew.
- ▶ "Henry Mayhew (1812-87) was a man of many talents - a journalist, author, playwright and co-founder of the famous satirical magazine *Punch*.



- ▶ "He was also a leading social reformer, responsible for shining a light on the lives and living conditions of those at the margins of society. Like a number of fellow Victorian reformers, Mayhew was influenced by the deadly impact of cholera on London. Following the deaths of some 13,000 Londoners during the second major outbreak in 1849, Mayhew wrote an article detailing the effects of the disease on Bermondsey, an impoverished area of London.



- "This led to his involvement in a broader survey of the condition of the poorer classes that produced a series of almost daily newspaper articles published later that year and well into 1850. While criticised by the right-wing press, these articles were praised by socialists, radicals and fellow reformers. The collected articles were first published in 1851 as *London Labour and the London Poor*, a book that remains a landmark work of social journalism.



- "For the first time, the realities of days spent struggling to make a living - not always legally - on the streets of London followed by nights spent crashed out in its cheapest, dirtiest boarding houses were set out in great detail.





- "In exposing such desperate people, blighted by disease, homelessness and unemployment, Mayhew provided real-life counterparts to the characters and stories of Charles Dickens, one of his great admirers."

July 2



- ▶ And still more from Peter Stadler!
This time, a link to a site about a pub which is mentioned in *The Pickwick Papers*:
- ▶ <http://www.thespaniardshampstead.co.uk/gallery/#.VZVEYx58wo.facebook>

July 2



THE MANUSCRIPT: MANUSCRIPT IN MUSEUM

Tolkien's Dickensian Dreams

Dickens' chemistry with Tolkien is Tolkien scholar. This is reminiscent of Tolkien's paper's last sentence in which says, with the prominent intention to publish it one day. When Tolkien never wanted to it.

<https://atolkienistperspective.wordpress.com/2015/07/01/tolkienes-dickensian-dreams/>

- And even more from Peter! He has now found an article about the influence of *The Pickwick Papers* on *Lord of the Rings*:
- <https://atolkienistperspective.wordpress.com/2015/07/01/tolkienes-dickensian-dreams/>

July 2

Death

- ▶ Here's Michael Segers on the experience of reading *Death and Mr Pickwick*:
- ▶ "I am reading along in Stephen Jarvis's amazing novel *Death and Mr Pickwick*. Yesterday, I experienced the premature death of the main character... and it was an experience. The novel, nonetheless, maintains its momentum and humor, but there is such a sense of loss. I just found a phrase later in the novel that captures the situation perfectly, 'a lively sense of mortality.' That is one of the most powerful phrases I have ever read."

July 3



- ▶ Hervey's *Poetical Sketches* on a writer who appears in *Dorothy and Mr. Pickwick*.
- ▶ "Thomas Kibble Hervey, born in 1796, was widely recognized by his peers and contemporaries as a talented writer in many different disciplines. From poetry to criticism, Hervey established himself as a popular writer during his life. Two of Hervey's earliest poems appear in *The Elbow*, a gift book published in 1828. Song and Anacrostic—exactly his talented, and popular, writing style that stretched beyond poetry.
- ▶ "Along with popular poetry, Hervey is noted for his biographical works, including several exhaustive (and exhausting) volumes written about Napoleon Bonaparte, the Duke of Wellington, and Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson. As an important figure in popular literature, Hervey often wrote on topics of love and marriage, history, and most importantly, social conditions, which appealed to the lower classes. Hervey was published often and, during the peak of his popularity, he married Dinah Louisa Montagu in 1840.



- "From 1830 to 1853, he continuously published poetry in anthologies and accumulated an astonishing number of published works. He was most influential as editor of *The Athenaeum* from 1846 to 1853, which was a magazine devoted to popular poetry and critical reviews. Montagu was published in her husband's magazine – in 1846, she wrote and published *A Display of Heraldry*."



- ▶ "Other important works written and published by Hervey include *Critique on the Critic* (1848), *An Essay on Physiology and the Sense of Feeling* (1852) *The Poetical Sketch Book* (1829), *Poetry for the Million* (1843) and *The Book of Christmas* (1836), with illustrations by Seymour. Hervey's earliest works may have been published in *The Bijou*, because his success as a popular writer was not established until 1830 when he began writing professionally. His death in 1859 appeared to end his popularity as well, because nothing was published posthumously and he has since faded into obscurity."

July 3



- The Waggon and Horses at Beckhampton, near Marlborough, is a fine old thatched pub which features in both *The Pickwick Papers* and *Death and Mr Pickwick*, and yesterday I enjoyed an excellent lunch there, of sausages followed by...



- ...rhubarb creme brulee...



- ...washed down by pints of Bishop's Tipple...



- ...and then by more pints of Bishop's Tipple.



- Note the various items of Pickwickiana displayed upon the walls.





- The previous day, Elaine and I stayed in *Marlborough*, at a coaching inn, *The Lamb*, where, as temperatures soared, we cooled down with Pimms in the pub's very pleasant garden.



- Nearby is another pub, The Green Dragon, which claims a Pickwickian association, as you can see from the detail of the pub's mural. Although, as far as I am aware, there is no evidence that Dickens stayed in The Green Dragon when he was writing *The Pickwick Papers*, the assertion of this "rumour" in the mural does create an item of Pickwickiana which is worth a look.



- We had supper that night in another Marlborough pub, The Castle and Ball, which also has a mural, showing the coaching road from London.



- Note the mounds displayed in the mural. These mysterious ancient earthworks are mentioned in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, when Seymour travels along the road, and their presence hints that supernatural forces may be at work in his life.

July 3



- ▶ As an extra incentive to enter the Great Death and Mr Pickwick photo competition, here's your chance to get A SIGNED *DEATH AND MR PICKWICK* BOOKMARK simply by submitting an entry! I have just received some of the rare *Death and Mr Pickwick* bookmarks from my American publisher Farrar, Straus & Giroux - and everyone who enters the Great Death and Mr Pickwick photo competition will receive a signed bookmark (while stocks last.).

July 3



- And now Peter Stadlera on Tom Jones:
- "In *Dröth* and *Mr Pickwick* we also meet Tom Jones, but not the "Tiger" from Wales...*The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*, often known simply as *Tom Jones*, is a comic novel by the English playwright and novelist Henry Fielding. The novel is both a Bildungsroman and a picaresque novel. First published on 28 February 1749 in London, *Tom Jones* is among the earliest English prose works describable as a novel. Totalling 346,747 words, it is divided into 18 smaller books, each preceded by a discursive chapter, often on topics unrelated to the book itself. It is dedicated to George Lyttleton.



- ▶ "Though lengthy, the novel is highly organised; S. T. Coleridge noted that it had one of the three great plots of all literature. It was received with enthusiasm by the general public of the time; though some critics, including Samuel Johnson, took exception to Fielding's "robust distinctions between right and wrong". Tom Jones is generally regarded as Fielding's greatest book, and as a very influential English novel. Here is an illustration of the novel done by Thomas Rowlandson."
- ▶

July 4



- ▶ It certainly gave me a strange feeling when I saw the "Reading Guide for *Death and Mr Pickwick*" which my American publisher, Farrar, Straus & Giroux has produced, and which you can find here:
- ▶ https://www.bookbrowse.com/reading_guides/detail/index.cfm/book_number/3251/death-and-mr-pickwick
- ▶ As you can see, the Reading Guide consists of a series of questions which could easily find a place on a university's English literature exam paper. And I must confess to a weirdly anxious sensation that I might not perform very well at all if I ever took part in such an exam...

July 5



- ▶ Before The Beatles, the most successful and influential British recording artist was Lonnie Donegan, the so-called 'King of Skiffle'. Nowadays, Donegan tends to be remembered - rather unfairly - for a single comic song, *My Old Man's a Dustman*, which you can watch on youtube here:
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q0ESHt6xoR0>
- ▶ The chorus goes 'My old man's a dustman, he wears a dustman's hat' - and it might be asked: 'What exactly is a dustman's hat?'

Dusty Bob

A cultural
history of
dustmen,
1780-1870

BRIAN MAIDMENT



- ▶ This question arises at the start of a book written by the Seymour-enthusiast Professor Brian Maidment, *Dusty Bob: A Cultural History of Dustman 1780-1870*. Professor Maidment recalls how Donegan's song haunted the jukeboxes of a childhood holiday in Swanage, and he remarks: "I now know, to my own satisfaction at least, what a dustman's hat was, and what it represented. I have constructed a history for it out of its remarkably prominent representation in prints, caricatures, fiction and reportage."

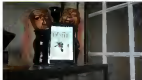


- ▶ Robert Seymour indeed drew a number of pictures of dustmen, and I mention dustmen on several occasions in *Death and Mr Pickwick*. In this Seymour picture note the distinctive fantail hat. The key point to make is that dustmen, in the nineteenth century, represented working-class people trying to improve themselves, and trying to acquire a level of cultural sophistication. So, in the picture you can see a dustman inquiring about the sheet music for *All Around My Hat*.



- And here, Seymour shows two dustmen sitting in a café, with a newspaper. "You shall have the paper directly, Sir," says the first dustman, "but really the debates are so very interesting." "Oh pray don't hurry, Sir," replies the second dustman, "it's only the scientific notices I care about."

July 5



- Announcing...a slight rule change in the *GREAT DEATH AND MR PICKWICK* PHOTO COMPETITION. Now, you don't have to show the *PHYSICAL* book in your photo - an *IMAGE* of the book displayed on a phone, computer or tablet will be acceptable in a photo too. So, if you are at a pub, or restaurant, or anywhere else, have someone take a photo of you holding up your phone showing *Death and Mr Pickwick*.

July 5



- ▶ Here is a post by Peter Stadlera about a poodle, Lady Jenny, whom I think should be nominated for the post of official Death and Mr Pickwick poodle. Michael Segars, in a comment on Peter's post said "Let's hear it for liberate gray animals!" I agree! Here's Peter:
- ▶ "Today we visited my parents and had an interesting discussion with their elderly poodle Lady Jenny. Gray, like Dory the official Death and Mr Pickwick parrot and Sir Feltz the official Death and Mr Pickwick cat, Lady Jenny is attentively reading through Don Quixote and The Pickwick Papers at the moment. What an unbelievable coincidence!



- "She sends warm and heartfelt greeting to the *Death and Mr Pickwick Club* I told her about, and showed her many pictures on Facebook. When she has finished *Don Quixote* and *The Pickwick Papers* (she's very fond of both books and is reading them in parallel with each other) Lady Jenny will eagerly turn to *Death and Mr Pickwick*. At the moment she's listening to Stephen's stories on youtube. Woofy greetings, Lady Jenny, the grey poodle!"



July 5



- ▶ Sir Pelzi now sends Summer greetings to the *Death and Mr Pickwick* Club:
- ▶ "As it's very warm outside I shall comfortably remain in a lying Roman position in the shade. And hello to our new official *Death and Mr Pickwick* poodle Lady Jane, sorry, I mean, Lady Jenny."

July 6



- ▶ Now Peter Stadler turns his attention to Smollett:
- ▶ "In *Death* and *Mr Pickwick* we come across some novels by Tobias Smollett.
- ▶ Smollett's first novel, *Roderick Random*, was one of adventure and bustling action, containing farce rather than comedy, and peopled with caricatures rather than portraits.



- "The first instalment of *The Life and Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves* was published in January, 1760. Sir Launcelot is an eighteenth-century gentleman who rides about the country in armour, attended by his comic squire, Timothy Crabshaw, redressing grievances. These characters are obviously inspired by Don Quixote and Sancho Panza, and Smollett's novel has been compared unfavorably with Cervantes'.



- ▶ "The Expedition of Humphry Clinker was the last of the picaresque novels of Tobias Smollett, and is considered by many to be his best and funniest work. Published in London on 17 June 1771 (just three months before Smollett's death), it is an epistolary novel, presented in the form of letters written by six characters: Matthew Bramble, a Welsh Squire; his sister Tabitha; their niece and nephew, Jeremy and Lydia Melford; Tabitha's maid Winifred Jenkins and Lydia's tutor, Wilson. In the picture we see the first meeting of Matthew Bramble and Humphry Clinker. Bramble hands the tattered Clinker a guinea to clothe himself better, Tabitha Bramble looks on angrily from right, and a man and a maid, Winifred Jenkins, look on too."

July 6



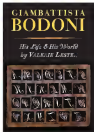
- Friday of this week is a very special day - the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of the third original *Pickwick* artist, Hablot Knight Browne, or Phiz as he was known. (Wikipedia erroneously gives his birthday as July 12th 1815, but he was actually born on the 10th.) To celebrate Phiz's life and career, I have asked his great-great-granddaughter, Valerie Browne Lester, to select five of Phiz's pictures - chosen either because they are her personal favourites, or because they are especially significant in Phiz's career - to produce a sort of 'countdown'. So, for five days there will be a daily Phiz picture, leading towards the No 1 pic on July 10th, and with each picture accompanied by commentary from Val.



- ▶ Before she talks about picture No 5 in the countdown, let me just say that I met Val for the first time in 2005, and we got on splendidly. Here we are at The George Inn in Southwark, at that very first meeting.
- ▶ The George, London's only remaining galleried coaching inn, is very close to the site of another long-gone coaching inn, The White Hart, where Mr Pickwick met Sam Weller for the first time, and Val and I are shown approximately recreating the poses of Mr Pickwick and Sam, from Phiz's picture of that scene.



- ▶ Val is the author of a wonderful biography of her ancestor, *Phiz, The Man Who Drew Dickens*, which was of tremendous importance to me when I was writing *Death and Mr Pickwick*.



- ▶ Later this month her biography of the great Italian printer Giambattista Bodoni (1710-1813), *Giambattista Bodoni: His Life and His World* will be published by David Godine. I have already ordered my copy from Amazon, and I can't wait for it to arrive! You can find out more about Val and her works at
- ▶ www.valerielester.com/
- ▶ Anyway, let me now hand over to Val for her comments on today's picture.



- ▶ "This is Phiz's large etching (19.5" X 12.5") of John Gilpin's ride. He executed it in 1832 when he was seventeen, and it won a prize from the Society of Arts that year. Etching becomes exponentially more difficult on large plates, and the Society found Phiz's skill with the etching needle astonishing in one so young. What is particularly interesting about this image is the fact that John Gilpin bears a strong resemblance to Mr Pickwick, and one can even see a likeness to Sam Weller in the jockey on the white horse, chasing after Gilpin – four years before the arrival of those two characters in *The Pickwick Papers*."

July 7



- ▶ Continuing our countdown of Phiz pictures, to celebrate the bicentenary of the artist's birth on Friday, here is the image chosen by his great-great-granddaughter Valene Browne Lester, as No. 4 in the 'chart'. This is what Val says about the picture:
- ▶ "I believe this little sketch by Phiz is of Mary Hogarth, Dickens's young sister-in-law. Right after Mary died in 1837, Dickens summoned Phiz to make an image of her, and Phiz complied. Sadly, the original painting is nowhere to be found, and Frederic Kitton's watercolour copy is a lifeless, prissy representation. The little unnamed sketch, however, presents a beautiful "living" young woman who bears a strong resemblance to Catherine and Georgina Hogarth as they appear in Machree's famous picture of them with Dickens."

July 7



Death and Mr. Pickwick, A Novel |
Washington Independent Review of
Books

The independent & important voice to the
community of readers and writers dedicated to

<http://www.washingtonindependentreviewofbooks.com>

- ▶ Here is the latest review of *Death and Mr. Pickwick*:
- ▶ <http://www.washingtonindependentreviewofbooks.com/bookreview/death-and-mr.-pickwick-a-novel>

July 7



- ▶ Peter Stadlera:
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we hear of a character named Ausonius (310-395). He was a Roman poet and teacher of rhetoric from Burdigala in Aquitaine, modern Bordeaux, France.



- "For a time he was tutor to the future emperor Gratian, who afterwards bestowed the consulship on him. His best-known poems are *Mosella*, a description of the river Moselle, and *Ephemeris*, an account of a typical day in his life. His many other verses show his concern for his family, friends, teachers, and circle of well-to-do acquaintances and his delight in the technical handling of meter.



- ▶ "For all of those who did Latin in school (like me :-)), here is a fine Epigrammata (please read the distich aloud in the proper verse metre to bring back memory of your Latin lessons, standing at the blackboard in front of the class):
- ▶ Collige, virgo, rosas, dum flos novus
et nova pubes
et memor esto aevum sic properare
tuum.
- ▶ I also liked this sentence: Omne
aevum curae; cunctis sua displicet
aetas.



- His longest poem, on the Moselle (Moselle) River, has flashes of an almost Wordsworthian response to nature, with descriptions of the changing scenery as the river moves through the country. Ausonius produced the useful autobiographical *Præfatriculæ* ("Prefaces"), *Eclogæ*, mnemonic verses on astronomy and astrology, *Ordo nobilium urbium* ("Order of Noble Cities"), *Ludæ septem sapientie* ("Play of the Seven Sages"), a forerunner of the morality play, and many epigrams, including adaptations from the Greek Anthology. His sentimental fondness for old times is seen in *Parentalia*, a series of poems on deceased relatives, and *Profusiones Sardigineses*, on the professors of Sardigala; these are delightful portraits that give a valuable picture of provincial Gallic life.

July 7



- ▶ Frank Bouchier-Hayes has just posted: "Decided to check on the progress of *Death and Mr Pickwick* in the British library sector courtesy of worldcat.org. Exeter and Tiverton library both have a copy lent to a reader. And it was a delight to discover, given that this was also the name of the house that Dickens lived in before his final residence at Gad's Hill, that in Devon a Tavistock library user is currently reading a copy of *The Pickwick Papers*." (Tavistock House is shown here.)

July 7



- ▶ Here is a wonderful fifteen second video review of *Death and Mr Pickwick* by John Highfield (@HighfieldPR on twitter):
- ▶ https://instagram.com/p/42E9PHF_do/

July 8

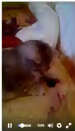


- ▶ We have now reached No. 3 in our countdown of Phiz pictures. Here is 'Vel':
- ▶ "For many years, Phiz lived with his family in Surrey. This lovely watercolour depicts the countryside around Banstead, and is, I believe, a self-portrait of Phiz seated on his cob, chatting to a shepherd. Phiz's son Edgar inherited the painting, and reproduced it in his book *Phiz and Dickens*. After that I can unearth no provenance until the author John Fowles found it, in an antique store, bearing the price of £5.00. The dealer had no idea that HKB was one and the same as Phiz, and took the £2.00 Fowles offered him. I found out that Fowles owned the painting, so I wrote to him asking if I could see it. He kindly invited me to do so at his house in Lyme Regis. I was delighted to find that he had it hanging directly over his desk.



- ▶ Incidentally, Fowles mentions Phiz in *The French Lieutenant's Woman*.
- ▶ After Fowles died, I wrote to his widow and asked to buy the picture if she was prepared to sell it. She was, and it is now one of my proudest possessions. Needless to say, I had to pay a lot more than the £2.00 Fowles paid for it . . ."

July 8



- ▶ Thanks to Peter Stadlers for this video of Sir Pelzi, the official Death and Mr Pickwick cat. Sir Pelzi happened to see a picture of another cat, Lady, who is the friend and companion of Dory, the official Death and Mr Pickwick parrot. Sir Pelzi seems to have fallen in love with Lady. He is the Don Quixote of cats in shiny grey fur armour, and she is the beautiful Dulcinea.
- ▶ Peter writes: "Sir Pelzi jumps for joy hearing that the title official Death and Mr Pickwick cat is for keeps and sends warm and furry greetings to Stephen. He also is a bit nervous after having seen Lady (his first thought was the Tom Jones song 'She's a Lady') and wants to show her what an active feline, and big hunter he actually is. Meow to the club says Sir Pelzi in action!"
- ▶ <https://www.facebook.com/peter.stadlers/video/1060023579792991/848064361848003/?typ=2&theater>

July 8



- And here is my very own lady, Elaine. She is in Long Island, New York on a work trip, but she happened to visit the local Barnes & Noble bookstore....

July 8



- ▶ A new pineapple rum, *Stiggins' Fancy*, has been launched, taking its name from the hypocritical rum-guzzling character Stiggins in *The Pickwick Papers*.





- Read about the rum here:
http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/08/dining/new-pineapple-rum-plantation-pineapple-rum-stiggins-fancy.html?_r=0



July 8

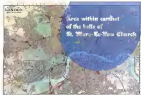


- Some of you will be aware that the *Death and Mr Pickwick* hasn't reached Canada yet - I have spoken to my agent about this, who has in turn spoken to Random House, and it seems that the book should be available very soon in Canadian bookstores. Wolverine won't be happy until he gets to read it...

July 8



- ▶ Here is Peter Stadlera on a church mentioned in *Death and Mr Pickwick*:
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read that 'The bells of Bow Church are famous for their chime'. Let's turn to this church and find out some interesting details. St Mary-le-Bow is a historic church rebuilt after the Great Fire of 1666 by Sir Christopher Wren in the City of London on the main east-west thoroughfare, Cheapside.



- ▶ "According to tradition, a true Cockney must be born within earshot of the sound of Bow Bells (which refers to this church's bells rather than St Mary and Holy Trinity, Bow Road, in Bow, an outlying village until the 19th century).

ORANGES & LEMONS
verse 1st - 1st of 10 pages
YOU OWE ME FIVE FARTINGS
verse 2nd - 2nd of 10 pages
WHEN WILL YOU PAY ME?
verse 3rd - 3rd of 10 pages
WHEN I GROW RICH
verse 4th - 4th of 10 pages
WHEN WILL THAT BE?
verse 5th - 5th of 10 pages
I DO NOT KNOW
verse 6th - 6th of 10 pages
HERE COMES A CAR HOLE
verse 7th - 7th of 10 pages
TO GRAB YOU TO HOLD
verse 8th - 8th of 10 pages
TO GRAB OFF YOUR HEAD
chop chop chop chop
THE LAST MAN'S DEAD

- "The church is immortalised in the nursery rhyme *Oranges and Lemons* which ends, aside from the chopping couplets, in many versions with "I do not know, says the great bell of Bow". You'll see here too the other verses of *Oranges and Lemons* referring to other London churches.



- ▶ "Outside this church we see an interesting plaque. At the top, there is a section of gilded inscribed poetry by John Dryden (1631-1700). (The "three poets" he refers to are Homer, Dante and Milton.)

- ▶ *"Three poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn;
The first in loftiness of thought
surpassed,
The next in majesty; in both the last:
The force of nature could no farther go,
To make a third, she joined the other
two.*

- ▶ "This is followed by information on the *Paradise Lost* author John Milton.



- ▶ "John Milton was born in Bread Street on Friday the 9th day of December 1608 and was baptised in the parish-church of All-Hallows Bread-Street on Tuesday the 20th day of December 1608. This tablet was placed on the church of All-Hallows, Bread Street early in the nineteenth century, as a memorial of the event therein recorded and was removed in the year 1876 when that church was pulled down and the parish united for ecclesiastical purposes with the parish of St. Mary-le-Bow."

July 9



- ▶ Well, we have now reached the No. 2 position in the countdown of Pfriz pictures. Here is Valene Browne Lester:
- ▶ "Pfriz's imagination knew no bounds. In 1854, he decided to write a highly-illustrated book, in rhyming couplets, called *The Adventures of Pott*. His friend, George Halse, was impressed by the illustrations but unimpressed with the couplets, which he deemed unpublishable. Halse then selected 40 of the illustrations and wrote up an accompanying narrative, which he titled *Sir Guy de Guy*. The successful book describes the monstrous adventures of Guy Straggles and his doughty Arabella, pictured here with gun, undaunted by her crinoline."

July 9



- ▶ I have just discovered that Dory, the official Death and/or Holocaust parrot, appears in this Anthony Brothers music video – and he is wearing a hat!
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MsdyQGBu8B4>
- ▶ This is what Dory's owner, Michael Segers, says about how Dory came to be photographed wearing a hat:
- ▶ "One of Dory's favorite toys is an empty toilet paper roll. One day, after he had shredded all of such a cardboard tube except for about an inch, I placed it on his head. For a moment, he held the pose, so I began to look for a little hat to try to persuade him to wear. Once I found the hat, he would not allow it on his head. So, I put it onto my head and talked to him about how much I enjoyed wearing it. It took most of an afternoon, but he finally kept the hat on long enough for me to snap this photo. The photo appeared on various sites, and was apparently appropriated by the video maker."

July 9

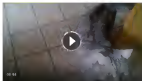


- ▶ *Death and Mr Pickwick* is named on the London Evening Standard's Best Summer Books List!!!

Here is what the Standard says:

- ▶ "This is an astonishing debut, (surely likely to feature in the Booker longlist later this month) by an expert on Dickens and in particular the first illustrator and possibly the original creator of *The Pickwick Papers*, Robert Seymour. It tells a surprising version of the story behind this comic masterpiece, completely contradicting the version later put about by Dickens himself, after Seymour's death. Jarvis fills out this story with truly Dickensian creative energy himself, funny enough, having after every digression, suddenly following a new character, giving us a life of the Great Ormaldi, all narrated from the vantage point of an assistant to a present day scholar and collector. Worth all its 800 pages – and a great prompt to go back to one of the funniest books in the language."

July 9



- ▶ And here is the latest video of Sir Pelzi, the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* cat! This is what Peter Stadlera says:
- ▶ "As we have just seen the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* parrot Dory starring in a video by the Bellamy Brothers wearing a straw hat, I have given my word to Sir Pelzi that he won't have to perform with the Bellamy Brothers in a hat as he is a noble feline with a long pedigree. He says he sticks with *Death and Mr Pickwick*, his favourite novel by far."
- ▶ <https://www.facebook.com/peter.stadlera/videos/vb.100003357979299/848936031861655/?type=2&theater>

July 10



- ▶ 200 hundred years ago today, on July 10th 1815, the third of the original Pickwick artists, Hablot Knight Browne, or Phiz, was born. For the last four days, I have been posting a countdown of Phiz's pictures, as chosen by his great-great-granddaughter Valerie Browne Lester. Now, on the bicentenary day itself, Val has chosen the No. 1 picture in the Phiz chart. Here are her comments on that picture.
- ▶ "We celebrate Phiz's 200th birthday with what is perhaps his most famous illustration of all, *The First Appearance of Mr Samuel Weller*. He cut the etching on the same plate as *The Breakdown*, and although *The Breakdown* appears before it in the text, Phiz actually drew Sam Weller first. So the hilarious fictional first encounter of Weller and Pickwick echoes the happy first encounter of Phiz and Boz and marks the beginning of their long collaboration.



- ▶ I am sure we would all like to thank Val for choosing the five pictures, and for her commentary on each.
- ▶ And today, why not raise a glass in tribute to a great artist, and say aloud the last two lines from the obituary that appeared in *Punch* magazine, a few days after he died:
- ▶ "There is no death for such a man — he is
The spirit of an unclosed book!
Immortal PHIZ!"
- ▶ Thank you Phiz, for your wonderful pictures.

July 10



- ▶ Here is Peter Stadler's latest post on a work which is mentioned in *Death and Mr Pickwick*:
- ▶ "I don't suppose many people (outside academia, at least) have read John Keble's *The Christian Year* (1827), and certainly some of it can be a little hard going, but it's one of those books that is too easily under-estimated."



- ▶ "Keble held the Chair of Poetry at Oxford (largely due to the success of *The Christian Year*) and his book was extremely popular. Keble was one of the Tractarians, so called because they produced *Tracts for the Times*, a kind of commentary on the state of the church and religious faith at the time. The Tractarian, or Oxford Movement, was a High Church development in mid-nineteenth century Christianity, whose active members included John Henry Newman, Edward Bouverie Pusey, and John Keble.



- ▶ "Christina Rossetti and Charlotte Yonge were two literary adherents, and may well have been attracted by the literary aspects of the movement, including Keble's book. Indeed, Christina Rossetti is known to have owned a well-thumbed copy for which she drew her own illustrations.



- ▶ "There is no doubt that the book was hugely influential. It has been described as one of the most popular books of poetry of the nineteenth century, and it seems as though most Victorian households must have owned a copy. Yet it is now all but forgotten. Perhaps this is partly due to its intensely religious nature (unsurprisingly, given the title) - the book features poems which celebrate the events of the Christian calendar according to the Book of Common Prayer. Its liturgical nature and solemnity of its verse perhaps makes it unappealing to modern readers, but because of its significance both theologically and historically, it's worth a look. Also, the poetry is often appealing and moving, though it also occasionally lapses into greeting-card-style rhymes."

July 11



- ▶ I have mentioned before that I first encountered the 'sad clown' motif, which is crucial in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, in Bob Dylan's song *A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall* - specifically, via the remarkable cover of that song on Bryan Ferry's 1973 album *These Foolish Things*. The hard rain in the song applies to whole series of disturbing lyrics, not just unhappy clowns - there is a newborn baby with wild wolves around it, a room full of men with their hammers a-bleedin', a wave that could drown the whole world - and many more amazing images which make up the symbolic rainfall. Well...



Bryan Ferry and Bob Dylan - A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall

Bryan and Bob perform a duet unplugged at The 10th Seattle Fest. Original: 1964 version and instrumentally by Dylan this year. Standard 2010

10:11 video 2:00:00

- ▶ ...there was an interesting news story last week which showed that the song is indicative of a general tendency in the man's songwriting. Because academics have analysed how pop music reflects the weather, and discovered that Dylan has written more songs that mention the weather than anyone else. I was going to mark this by posting a video of Dylan performing A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall, but when I looked on youtube, I came across this very amusing video, which I shall post instead. It's by the British comedian Steve Rink, performing the song as both Ferry and Dylan.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qav0QzhDPJo>

July 11



- I have just received this photo, showing Valerie Browne Lester and her family toasting their great ancestor Phiz on his 200th birthday yesterday.

July 11



- And I have received this photo from Michael Segers showing Dory, the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* parrot, contemplating bodhisattva Samantabhadra.

July 12



- ▶ I have mentioned before that I used to write about unusual leisure activities, and that this was one of the things that laid the foundation for writing *Death and Mr Pickwick*. I thought that people might be interested in hearing some more about this part of my writing life, and so here is the magazine, *City Limits*, in which my very first published piece appeared.



- It was an article about the game of tiddlywinks, in which little plastic discs are flipped into a pot, and you can see here a champion player, Charles Relle, whom I interviewed.





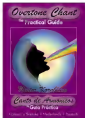
- The article, though, is headed *In Pursuit of Noakesian Man*, and this was a reference to a TV presenter, John Noakes.



- ▶ Noakes, shown here with his dog Shep, was a big part of my childhood. He was famous for having a go at anything - and something of that spirit motivated my articles. (Noakes was actually in the news recently - now in his eighties, he is suffering from Alzheimer's, and sadly wandered off and got lost, but fortunately was found.)



- But I was originally motivated to try out unusual leisure activities because I was utterly bored with the job I was doing at British Aerospace in Hatfield, where I bought components for the 146 airliner: even if I hated my job, I thought that I would try to make my weekends interesting. So I started searching for unusual workshops and courses I could do...



- ...such as for Tibetan overtone chanting, where you learn how to sing two notes simultaneously.



- ▶ When colleagues at work started asking me "Well, what did you get up to THIS weekend?" I thought that if people were interested, perhaps I could start writing about my experiences. So, I attended an evening journalism course, taught by the lovely and very charismatic Diana Eden, with whom I am still in touch, and eventually I got the first article published.



- I went on to do many more articles, and here I am shown as the Mad Hatter - this was when I attended a meeting of the Lewis Carroll Society, but the picture was emblematic of the articles as a whole, and the many bizarre things I tried out.



- ▶ I should say though that I had previously had some unsuccessful attempts at writing. I even had a go at writing a romantic novel for the company Mills & Boon - the UK equivalent of the American Harlequin Romance - under a woman's name, either Katie Matthews or Katie Marshall, I am not sure now which. (It was the stage name of my great-grandmother, who was a pianist.)



- After several failures at writing, I thought I had better get a 'proper job', and just before I was employed by British Aerospace, I landed a position as a trainee 'Punt Chauffeur', in Cambridge. I was terrible at this, and fell in the river, but in any case I had to give up the job after just two days, because my father died, and I had to go home.



- But it sometimes strikes me as strange that this job involved the very sort of boat in which Mr Pickwick made his first appearance in the world - because Mr Pickwick is portrayed sleeping in a punt in Seymour's wrapper for the serial parts issue of *The Pickwick Papers*.

July 12



- ▶ As we know, Sir Pelzi, the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* cat, sees himself as Don Quixote, and he has his own female cat Dulcinea - Lady, or Lady of the Green Castle as he calls her. Michael Segers has just posted this picture of Lady, and accompanied it with lyrics from the *Man of La Mancha* soundtrack...



- ▶ To each his Dulcinea
- ▶ That he alone can name...
- ▶ To each a secret hiding place
- ▶ Where he can find the haunting face
- ▶ To light his secret flame.
- ▶ For with his Dulcinea
- ▶ Beside him so to stand
- ▶ A man can do quite anything
- ▶ Outfly the bird upon the wing
- ▶ Hold moonlight in his hand.



- ▶ Yet if you build your life on dreams
- ▶ It's prudent to recall
- ▶ A man with moonlight in his hand
- ▶ Has nothing there at all.
- ▶ There is no Dulcinea,
- ▶ She's made of flame and air;
- ▶ And yet how lovely life would seem
- ▶ If ev'ry man could weave a dream
- ▶ To keep him from despair.
- ▶ To each his Dulcinea...
- ▶ Though she's naught but flame and air!
- ▶

July 12



- ▶ The Guardian's list of Best Holiday Reads has just appeared online. The cultural historian and biographer Lucy Hughes-Hallett has this to say about her holiday reading:
- ▶ "This year, I'm staying at home to watch the grass grow in our Suffolk garden, and finishing *Death and Mr Pickwick* by Stephen Jarvis (Jonathan Cape £20), a novel as crowded, rude and brilliantly inventive as the great pre-Dickensian caricatures it celebrates."

July 12



So much story-telling in the dark: *Death and Mr Pickwick*

<http://effrasebbsandflows.blogspot.com/> by EFFRA

- ▶ Here is another review:
- ▶ <http://effrasebbsandflows.blogspot.co.uk/2015/07/death-and-mr-pickwick.html>

July 13



- ▶ Yesterday, I posted about the start of my writing career, and in particular I spoke of how I used to write articles about unusual leisure activities. Flicking through my old articles from that period, I came across quite a few which have some relevance to *Death and Mr Pickwick* - and as my articles were often accompanied by pictures or photographs, I thought I would put together a little 'album', dating from those times.
- ▶ I met many people with a profound interest in some subject, and so you'll see here a member of the International Sand Collectors' Society - he would magnificently grains of sand and look at them on TV.



- And here is a chap who had collected thousands of old train tickets. Meeting such people provided a great preparation for writing about Mr N in *Death* and Mr Pickwick, the man who spent fifteen years cataloguing every word in *The Pickwick Papers*.



- Duelling features in both *Death and Mr Pickwick*, and *The Pickwick Papers* - and I met a group of duelling re-enactors, the Edinburgh-based Dawn Duellists' Society.



- I also met the Muzzle Loaders' Association: the members fire antique weapons, and some certainly owned and fired fowling guns, of the sort that Seymour used in his suicide.



- *Death and Mr Pickwick* could be seen as an exercise in 'alternative history' - I present a different origin story of *Pickwick* from the conventional one - and I once interviewed a man who edited a magazine called *Alternate Worlds*. *Replaying World War 2*, in which the Axis won, was among the alternative histories featured in his magazine.



- ▶ I also underwent hypnotic regression, and the illustration shows three of my 'previous lives': as a Victorian woman, as a 17th century German quack doctor, and as a hunter from 687 BC. I don't believe these actually were previous lives - I think regression creates an illusion, born in the subconscious - but the experience provided a background for comments in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, where Scripty and Mr Inbelicate consider using regression to find out about the past.



- There is a lot of snuff consumed in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, and I indeed entered the British Snuff-Taking Championships, where you have to take fifty sorts of snuff as fast as possible, and if you sneeze, cough or splutter you are disqualified. The family shown in the photo dominated the championship for many years.



- I also met pipe-smoking enthusiasts: I even entered a churchwarden smoking competition, where you have to keep the pipe alight as long as possible - and of course there are many mentions of churchwardens in *Death and Mr Pickwick*. One pipe-enthusiast told me that he polished his pipe with grease from the pores of his nose, and I used this specific detail in the novel.



- This picture, showing a spectral shape, accompanied a *Daily Telegraph* article about ghostbusting. I spent a night in a supposedly haunted fort in Kent, a cavernous place whose walls were hewn out of chalk. My memories of this fort certainly influenced the way I wrote about the cavern below the church in Chatham, which Charles Dickens entered as a boy.



- ▶ And the last picture is a sad one. In *Death and Mr Pickwick*, Scripty talks of meeting a man who collected old spectacles and other items connected to the trade of an optician, such as eye charts and glass eyes. Scripty said that this man later committed suicide. I interviewed a collector of optical items - and I am afraid that a couple of years later I discovered that he had taken his own life.
- ▶ Writers are notorious for recycling their own experiences in novels. I am no exception.

July 13



- ▶ Three of Elaine's colleagues spotted *Death and Mr Pickwick* on sale in Denver, Colorado, and have just sent her these photos. So here are Michael Caddy on the left, and Martin Whittaker on the right. (And thanks to Rob Mayne for taking the pics.)



July 13



- ▶ Peter Stadlera has now posted a fascinating piece about Rochester Bridge:
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read Dismal Jemmy's remark about the "delights of suicide from Rochester Bridge". Well, the history of Rochester Bridge is as long and meandering as the river it crosses...



- "The bridge and the Medway are the main reasons Rochester exists. What we call Rochester Bridge is in fact three – two road bridges (one formerly a rail bridge) and the other a rail-only crossing. The road bridge carries the only trunk road in Britain that has not been taken over by a highways authority.



- ▶ "The old medieval bridge was associated with a birthday party that ended in tragedy.
- ▶ "Thomas Gilbert, scion of a family that ran a successful linen and drapery firm in Chatham, was celebrating his 21st birthday. He had just completed his apprenticeship and was looking forward to becoming part of the business in his own right. For his birthday celebrations he organised a trip with boatman Thomas Lear up the river to Halling for his close family and nine girls from the boarding school that his father had founded in Chatham some years before. After several hours spent at Halling, the party of 15 returned to the boat for the journey back to Rochester. Faterfully, that morning workmen had placed a length of timber across the central arch of the bridge as part of a programme of repairs...



- ▶ "On the journey upstream, the Gilberts' boat passed safely over the beam on the full tide. On the evening ebb tide, it had become exposed. The boat struck the timber at speed and all its 15 occupants were tipped into the current. Only the boatman Lear's dog succeeded in swimming to the shore. Mrs Elizabeth Gilbert had declined her son's invitation to join the party and in doing so had lost that son, her two daughters, her son-in-law and her only grandchild. Grief-stricken, and now the sole surviving member of her family, she paid tribute to the dead with a memorial stone in the Baptist Church in Clover Street, Chatham. This stone is now on display in the Guildhall Museum, where it still serves to commemorate the '15 young persons swept into Eternity in an unexpected moment'."

July 14



- ▶ Another event which brought me closer to writing *Geeth and Sir Pickwick* was the appearance of the compilation book of my bizarre leisure articles, called *The Ultimate Guide to Unusual Leisure*. The important thing about this volume is that it appeared with illustrations, and so was a major step along the road to writing about *Geeth and Pickwick*. The book was an expanded version of a previous compilation of my articles, *The Bizarre Leisure Book* - I had wanted that to appear with illustrations too, but the publisher failed to agree terms with the artist, and so it appeared in unillustrated form. When it came to the follow-up, I happened to be standing at a bar, talking about the book project, and the conversation was overheard by a chap called David Candler. David worked in TV, but he offered his services as a cartoonist - and, to the best of my knowledge, *The Ultimate Guide to Unusual Leisure* is the only book he has ever illustrated.



- Scattered throughout the text are little thumbnail cartoons by David. I have selected twelve. This one accompanied an article on The Poison Bottle Collectors' Association. In *Death and Mr Pickwick*, I mentioned a poison bottle with a death's-head as a stopper, and I was certainly thinking of the Poison Bottle Collectors when I wrote this.



- The Society for the Preservation of Oversize Footwear (whose members collect giant shoes).



- The International Guild of Knot-Tyers.



- Tarantula Breeding.



- The Giant Vegetable Championships.



- The Bald Headed Men of America.



- The Association of Gravestone Studies.



- Lavatory seat hurling.



- ▶ The Biggest Liar in the World Contest.
- ▶ This lying contest has something in common with the Daffy Club in *Death and Mr Pickwick*. "The best of us can make almost anything believable," says the Daffy Club member Pierce Egan, "and tell the most outrageous lie with a face as straight as a Roman road."



- The Carnivorous Plant Society.



► Ghostbusting!



- The Handlebar Club.

July 14



- Here we have Sir Pelzi, the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* cat, in a very relaxed, laid-back position sending his greetings to the *Death and Mr Pickwick* Club, his friend Dory and especially to Lady, the orange coloured *Marx*, queen of hearts and darling of his dreams. "Enjoy the week, my friends, as I do. Plushy wishes, Sir Pelzi."

July 14

LIBRARY RECOMMENDATIONS



The Pickwick Papers
by Charles Dickens



The Pickwick Papers
by Charles Dickens



The Pickwick Papers
by Charles Dickens



The Pickwick Papers
by Charles Dickens



The Pickwick Papers
by Charles Dickens



The Pickwick Papers
by Charles Dickens

- *Death and Mr Pickwick* is listed among "8 Beach Reads for Bibliophiles", in the latest issue of *Fine Books and Collections* magazine. (Check out their website at: <http://www.finebooksmagazine.com/>)

July 14



- ▶ In *Death and Mr Pickwick*, I describe the pressures that Dickens was under as he wrote the monthly parts of *The Pickwick Papers*: 'He had to write, it had to be done, it could not be thought about too much, it could not be revised once written. Let others heed Horace's advice in *Ars Poetica*, for keeping a book nine years in the study before presenting it to the world, to remove the folly of hastily composed writing. Soz must do now, with no chance of correction. Who had attempted this before, except crazed prophets and mad poets?' Well, the amazing Peter Stadiera has now posted an excellent piece about Horace.



- ▶ Peter Stadler: "In *Drath and Mr Pickwick* we come across Horace's *Ars Poetica* and the advice 'to keep a book nine years in the study before presenting it to the world'. Horace (65-8 BC) was the leading Roman lyric poet during the time of Augustus. As I remember from my Latin courses, he crafted elegant hexameter verses and iambic poetry. *Ars Poetica* ("The Art of Poetry" or "On the Nature of Poetry"), sometimes known under its original title, *Epistula Ad Pisones* ("Letters to the Pisos"), is a treatise or literary essay on poetics by Horace, published around 18 or 19 BC. The poem takes the form of a letter of advice on the pursuit of literature, addressed to a father and two sons, known only as the Pisos, whose identity is uncertain.



- ▶ "The work is often split up into sections as follows (although other splits have also been suggested):
- ▶ Lines 1 - 37: On unity and harmony.
Lines 38 - 72: The writer's aims.
Lines 73 - 118: What the tradition dictates (decorum).
Lines 119 - 152: Invention vs. imitation (be consistent if you are original).
Lines 153 - 188: On characterization (the four ages of man).
Lines 189 - 219: On the gods, chorus and music (in tragic drama).
Lines 220 - 250: On style (especially in satyr plays).
Lines 251 - 274: On metre and versification.



ARS POETICA



- "Lines 275 - 294: Tragedy and comedy, Greek and Roman poets.
Lines 295 - 332: How to be a good poet (talent versus art).
Lines 333 - 365: Combine instruction with pleasure.
Lines 366 - 407: Avoid mediocrity (errors are permissible if there are compensating pleasures).
Lines 408 - 437: Study and talent are both needed, but beware of the flattery of critics.
Lines 438 - 476: Know your faults and keep your wits.



- "The work exercised a great influence on Renaissance European literature. It was first translated into English by Ben Jonson in 1640. Horace coined the expression "in medias res" (in the middle of things) and "carpe diem" (live the day... Which is followed by the words "quam minimum credula postero" meaning "don't take care very much of tomorrow)."

July 15



- ▶ I was watching the BBC TV show *Fake or Fortune* the other day, in which Fiona Bruce, assisted by art experts, tries to find out whether a painting, supposedly by a great artist, is genuine or not.
- ▶ Establishing provenance - a 'paper trail of ownership' - is a huge part of getting a painting accepted as genuine, and as I watched the show I was reminded of the time when I encountered what was almost certainly a fake Seymour on sale for \$15,000.



- ▶ An antiquarian book dealer in New York was offering original steel etching plates for several of Seymour's and Piss's works for *The Pickwick Papers*, including this one for Mr. Winkle Soother the Refractory Streed.
- ▶ The dealer could offer no provenance at all. "We bought the collection quite a few years ago from a European dealer (don't recall which one), he told me in an email," and only very recently catalogued them and put them out for sale.
- ▶ Of course it would be simplicity itself for a "European dealer" to have acquired an etching which was made rather more recently than 1836, by tracing Seymour's drawing and applying acid to a rusty-wooded steel plate! But aside from the lack of provenance, there was a massive problem which proved that the plates in this collection were almost certainly fake - there was just a single image on each piece of steel. The plates for *Pickwick* bore two images, and the printed double-images were then cut in half, to accompany the text.

July 15



- ▶ The commercial products of the nineteenth century, mentioned in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, and *The Pickwick Papers*, have a certain fascination because of their names. Peter Stadlera's latest post was inspired by hair cream:
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about 'Arnold's Imperial Cream pomatum'...

Queen Victoria, who was an indefatigable supporter of Melbourne's personal habits, was amazed to hear someone whose hairdressers dipped into water. He dyed his hair "with a little orange flower water" and a **pomatum** called "Arncliffe Imperial Cream". The result was to make his hair "as black", but the Queen was inclined to be critical.¹⁰⁷ Eyebrows were equally a matter of concern. Of Lord M's eyebrows, and whether he ever cut them, "I don't meddle with them," he said, "You should to cut them, it makes them pop."

- ▶ "Lord Melbourne, a very fashionable and stylish man, used this pomatum. William Lamb, 2nd Viscount Melbourne (1779-1848) was Home Secretary, and served as Prime Minister in 1834 and 1835-1841.





- ▶ "A mentor to Queen Victoria, his most lasting memorial is the city of Melbourne, Australia, which was named after him in 1837."

July 16



- ▶ When *Death and Mr Pickwick* was published in the USA, I was interviewed by the *Wall Street Journal*, who also approached the leading Dickensian Professor Michael Slater for his reaction to the book's revelations. Professor Slater is the author of a recent biography of Dickens, and is usually regarded as the man who knows more about Dickens than anyone else in the world. Professor Slater claimed that my book (which I doubt whether he had read, at least at that time) missed the point, as the success of *The Pickwick Papers*—which was originally published in serial form—only arrived after Seymour's death, by which time it was illustrated by Phoebe.



- ▶ "The whole point," Professor Slater told the *Wall Street Journal*, "was that *The Pickwick Papers* didn't become hugely successful until about the fourth number, when Dickens introduced Sam Weller, Mr. Pickwick's servant. Dickens in fact gave the English public a kind of version of Cervantes's *Don Quixote* and Sancho Panza—of this rather idealistic, unworldly master and the knowing servant who looks after him. All that had nothing to do with Seymour."



- ▶ Such claims need to be taken apart, and it will take more than a single day's post to do so. To begin: the indications are that Seymour **WAS** involved in the creation of Sam Weller. This was indeed stated by the engraver Ebenezer Landells in a speech he gave in 1850, in which he said: "Seymour conceived the characters of Pickwick and Sam Weller before even a line of the work was written." And Landells was not just anyone - Landells was actually working for Chapman and Hall, the publishers of *The Pickwick Papers*, at the very time that *Pickwick* was published.



- ▶ In fact, Landells did the engraving for Seymour's picture *The Tuggs's at Ramsgate* for the company's publication *The Library of Fiction*.
- ▶ One has to say: "Landells was there, on the spot, in 1836 - you were not, Professor Slater." Landells' claim that Seymour invented Sam Weller cannot simply be ignored, or dismissed. I shall continue this tomorrow.

July 16



- For his distinguished service as the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* cat, I sent Sir Pelzi a signed bookmark. He has sent us his response...



- "Dear Stephen, today was a big day for me when the mailman brought my personal bookmark: I sniffed at it..."



- "...felt it leaning against my fur...



- ▶ "...I even ate from it my favourite chicken and seafood strips like from a plate while your novel *Death and Mr Pickwick* was by my side...



- "I feel very honoured by your gift and give it a place of honour on my desk...."



- "Yes, cats have a special way of looking at you, haven't they...All the best wishes, Sir Pelzi"

July 16

“WOODHOUSE'S **ETHEREAL ESSENCE OF GINGER** is recommended by all cold, phlegmatic, weak, and nervous constitutions; *Spasms, Cramps, Flatulency, Languor, Hysteria, Heartburn, or of Appetite, Sensation of Fulness, Pain after Meals; also those of Stomach and Bowels which arise from Querty Flatulencies; improved palish is induced by its prompt state by the use of this **Extract** for a at time.* Two hundred and eight Medical men of eminence have given evidence of their unqualified approbation, and of its superiority over all its similar preparations.

Prepared only by DOMENUS WOODHOUSE, Operative Chemist, Extraordinary to his Majesty, 18, King William-street, Near London Bridge, and d by him, wholesale and retail; and to be had of all Medicine Vendors town and country, in bottles, at 2s. 6d., 4s. 6d., 10s. 6d., and 21s. each. *Caution.*—The name of DOMENUS WOODHOUSE is engraven on the wrapper stamp, otherwise cannot be genuine.

- ▶ Peter Stadlera now turns his attention to another product used by Lord Melbourne...
- ▶ “In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read that ‘Melbourne poured himself a shot glass of Woodhouse’s Ethereal Essence of Ginger.’ But what does this essence consist of and what is it good for?

BALM OF SPERMACE

ASTHMA, Shortness of Breath, Whooping Coughs, Colds, Hoarseness, Phlegm, and Oppression of the Chest, and most affections of the Chest and Lungs, relieved in ten minutes, by taking one dose of WOODHOUSE'S BALM OF SPERMACE, OR PRINCIPAL OIL OF SHARP. Persons doubting the efficacy of this Medicine may take a dose in the Emperor's Ship when they pass it. The Proprietor certainly recommends a trial of these Drops to persons affected with the above complaints, but he does not guarantee them as being curable while worn (as many do), but is warranted in asserting their efficacy from the extensive trial of tested circumstances more of the above description. Counterfeited Coughs of Hoarseness, and many years' standing, have been cured at the expense of a week by the use of these Drops. In the Whooping and Cold Coughs it will be found equally valuable. It will at all times relieve the most violent Consumption Cough—in Doses of 1gr., 2s. 3d., 4s. 6d., and 10s. 6d. each.

This Preparation is prepared only by DECIMUS WOODHOUSE, Operative Chemist, Experimentalist to His Majesty, 18, King William Street, near London Bridge, and sold by his Friends and friends, and to be had of all Medicine Vendors in Town and Country.—Country Vendors may be supplied through their respective agents.

*See Notice of the Medical Review of Drops,
OF B—BE SURE TO ASK FOR WOODHOUSE'S.*

CAUTION.—To prevent imposition, be sure to use the name of DECIMUS WOODHOUSE, 18, King William Street, London Bridge, as registered in the Government Stamp, otherwise it cannot be obtained.

- ▶ "BE SURE TO ASK FOR WOODHOUSE'S" - such is the advice of Decimus Woodhouse, a chemist of London, regarding his spectacular products.



- "I did some research, collected some old advertisements..."

100

1000

ADDRESS: WOODWARD, Eric Williams, *David*, June 28 at 10, and July 27 at 11:00 a.m., Dept. of Mathematics, 505 San Francisco, Suite 3400 at 10, University, San Francisco, California 94142.



- ▶ "...and even found out that he went bankrupt, as I read in *The Jurist*, vol. 2 of 1839..
- ▶ "It would be interesting to know whether he would have succeeded today with so many nutritional supplements now available..."

July 16



- ▶ Here is the latest pic of Dory, the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* parrot.
- ▶ Michael Segers: "My parrot Dory just said, 'Everybody say Hi, Dory!'"
- ▶ "Hi Dory!"

July 17



- ▶ Continuing the discussion from yesterday about the creation of Sam Weller... Ebenezer Landells said that Robert Seymour had created Sam Weller, but is there anything to back this up? If Seymour had shown interest in Don Quixote's sidekick Sancho Panza, then it would be strongly supportive of what Landells said, because the duo of Mr Pickwick and Sam Weller could be seen as the re-creation of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza in an English context. Well, let us turn to *Sketches by Seymour*, a compilation of Seymour's humorous works, published in many editions after the artist's death. One edition, whose title-page is on the left, is somewhat different from the others, as there is a preface which contains details of Seymour's life and works, showing greater apparent knowledge than the other editions.

CHARLES DICKENS AND HIS ORIGINAL ILLUSTRATORS

Jane R. Cohen



- The preface is anonymous, but I came across a letter in the Dickens Museum, in which the academic Jane Cohen, author of the book *Charles Dickens and his Original Illustrators*, conjectured that it may have been written by Seymour's son. Not long after I read this letter, I found confirmation of the conjecture, in the form of a letter written by Seymour's son, and currently owned by the print collector David Alexander, where Seymour Jr. said that he had written an introduction to an edition of his father's works. There is a very significant line in the preface where mention is made of a large painting by Seymour on the theme of "Sancho and the Duchess." This is a scene from *Don Quixote* - and the fact that it prioritises Sancho, not the Don, is backing for what Landells had said.



- Could Seymour Jr have deliberately invented this detail in order to 'manufacture' a background which would lend support to the idea that Robert Seymour played a large role in the creation of *The Pickwick Papers*? This is extremely unlikely, because Seymour's son had published material showing no desire at all to 'big up' his father's role, but rather the exact opposite tendency.



- ▶ Seymour Jr spoke of how an entry in his father's workbook recorded the re-etching of the plates for *Pickwick*, and he interpreted this as meaning that his father's ideas for *Pickwick* had been modified in accordance with Dickens's wishes. However Seymour Jr did not know that the re-etching had occurred for a different reason - it was because faulty steel had been used for the plates, and so of course Seymour had to re-etch them. But the very fact Seymour Jr put that interpretation on the workbook proved his own integrity: if he had been an utter scoundrel, intent upon magnifying his father's role in *Pickwick*, he would have kept quiet about the workbook.
- ▶ So Landell's statement was extremely plausible...and I shall say more tomorrow.

July 17



- ▶ Here is Frank Bouchier-Hayes on the subject of *Pickwick* and tea:
- ▶ "When we think of *The Pickwick Papers*, many things come to our mind. One of which, for me at any rate, is tea. As a self confessed teaholic I am always looking out for different teabrand so it was nice to come across this association with the novel.



- "I also came across some nice teapots, jugs and cups..."









- "And a lamp base featuring Jingle so that you will have some *Pickwick*-themed light when you are enjoying a late cuppa."

July 17



- ▶ After Seymour's suicide, Mrs Seymour and her children were reduced to poverty. In *Death and Mr Pickwick*, I show how Mrs Seymour appealed to Dickens, asking him whether he could put on an additional performance of Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour* to aid her family, as Dickens had already put on a charity performance of the play. Dickens refused. Here is a post by Peter Stadlera about the play.



Illustration of a scene from the play 'Every Man in His Humour'.

- "In *Death and Mr Polixeno* we read about a performance of *Every Man in His Humour*" Here we have some further facts. *Every Man in His Humour* is a comic drama in five acts that established the reputation of the playwright Ben Jonson. It was performed in London by the Lord Chamberlain's Men in 1598 and revised sometime before its publication in the folio edition of 1616.





- “With its galleries of grotesques, its scornful detachment, and its rather academic effect, the play introduced to the English stage a vigorous and direct anatomizing of “the time’s deformities”—the language, habits, and humours of the contemporary London scene.



- "The characters in *Every Man in His Humour* are based on the four humours of medieval physiology, bodily fluids that were held to influence personality or temperament. They are driven by their unchangeable personalities and tend to avoid interaction. Charles Dickens himself played the character of Captain Bobadil in 1845-1847 and 1850, as shown in the print here, which was probably made around this time."

July 17



'Death and Mr. Pickwick,' by
Stephen Jarvis

A reviewer argues that 'The Pickwick Papers' was
rounded first as a disaster

(NYTIMES.COM) | BY MICHAEL UPCHURCH

- ▶ *Death and Mr Pickwick* has just been reviewed in the *New York Times*. Judge for yourselves:
- ▶ http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/19/books/review/death-and-mr-pickwick-by-stephen-jarvis.html?_r=1

July 18



- ▶ Anyway, after THAT review by the *New York Times*, I shall try to focus again on Seymour's role in the creation of Sam Weller.
- ▶ If one looks at Seymour's body of work, one can find various prototypes, or forerunners, of Mr Pickwick. They are not exactly Mr Pickwick, but getting towards the character, and in some cases seem so close to Mr Pickwick that one might as well call them Mr Pickwick. Can one find any visual prototypes for Sam Weller in Seymour's work, which would add further weight to Ebenezer Landells' claim that Seymour created Sam Weller?



- ▶ Well, certainly there is the character shown here, assisting the bespectacled fisherman, who appeared in *Maxims and Hints for an Angler*, drawn by Seymour.



- Note in particular the cockade in the character's hat, which Sam Weller adopts after being taken on by Mr Pickwick. Cockades were actually rare things for manservants to wear. The cockade was a badge intended for servants of royalty, peers, military officers, and others serving under the crown. The fact that Mr Pickwick has a servant with a cockade is indicative of his unworliness.

July 18



- ▶ Sir Pelzi, the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* cat, expresses his anger here at the New York Times review of the novel:
- ▶ <https://www.facebook.com/peter.stadlera/videos/vb.100002357979299/852694718152453/?type=2&theater>
- ▶ Peter Stadlera says: "Sir Pelzi was very upset with the *NYT* review and imagined the toy mouse was the reviewer."

July 19



- ▶ Continuing the discussion of Seymour as the likely creator of Sam Weller...
- ▶ When I discovered that Dickens was lying about the origin of *Pickwick*, I was immediately faced with the question: well, what was the origin of *Pickwick* then? I looked around for things in Seymour's background which could have inspired parts of *The Pickwick Papers*, and probably the most significant discovery of all was the Daffy Club, the subject of an article in Pierce Egon's *Book of Sports and Mirror of Life*.



- Seymour definitely worked on this publication - he drew the wrapper design, and I have enlarged a corner showing his signature.





- Unfortunately, the illustrations in the magazine are unsigned, but anyone looking at the drawing of the Daffy Club here would identify it as by Seymour. Look at the character on the left, who resembles Mr Pickwick, although thinned down.



- And note the points of resemblance to Seymour's drawing *Mr Pickwick Addresses the Club*: the triangular spittoon on the floor, the dog in the foreground in one and the dog in shadows under the table in the other, and the pictures on the walls. The Daffy Club drawing is cruder, because it is a woodcut, not an etching, but the resemblances are these:





- And when I read in the *Book of Sports and Mirror of Life* about the Daffy Club's activity of telling tall stories, Baron Munchausen-like travellers' tales, it seemed obvious to me that, in doing the drawing of the Daffy Club, Seymour had stumbled across a 'factory' for the very sort of anecdotes that the gullible Mr Pickwick would believe to be true. Mr Pickwick is, in essence, the 'ideal audience' for the Daffy Club's tales - a man who believes their tales to be completely factual.



- ▶ Now consider this: if Mr Pickwick travels around the country, believing any wild tale which is told to him - such as a tale of dog that can read - then is this not very much akin to the madness of Don Quixote, who on his travels believes that an inn is a castle and a windmill a giant? And if someone **ALREADY HAS A PRIOR INTEREST IN DON QUIXOTE** - as demonstrated by Seymour's painting *Sancho and the Duchess* - then will that person not immediately connect the gullible travelling Mr Pickwick to Don Quixote? And will there not immediately follow the thought that Mr Pickwick needs a counterpart to Sancho Panza?
- ▶ Yet again, it is entirely plausible that Seymour invented Sam Weller, as Ebenezer Landells said.

July 19



- ▶ Here is the latest news, from Peter Stadiera, about Lady Jenny, the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* poodle:
- ▶ "Lady Jenny went to the hairdresser yesterday and here is her new look. Lady Jenny says that's the same hairdresser as Her Majesty the Queen goes to..."

July 19



- In *Death and Mr Pickwick*, the character of Una, from Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, appears in the painting *Una in the Cave of Despair* by Seymour's artistic mentor Joseph Severn. Michael Segers has just pasted this painting showing another depiction of the Faerie Queene's Una, *Una and the Lion* by Briton Rivière (1840-1920)

July 19



- ▶ Yesterday, Sir Pelzi, the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* cat, expressed his feelings about the unfavourable review of *Death and Mr Pickwick* in the New York Times. Now, Dory, the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* parrot, wishes to make his feelings known. Here is what Michael Segers says: "Dory, the official parrot of the novel *Death and Mr Pickwick*, is especially enjoying his lunch, loading up to express his opinion of a particular page of *The New York Times*, with a review of his favorite novel. I hate to break it to him that I have the newspaper, like the novel, only on my tablet, and I am not going to let him - ahem - express his opinion on my tablet, no matter how much the reviewer missed the point of the novel."
- ▶ Beware, reviewers, of the wrath of official *Death and Mr Pickwick* pets!

July 19



- ▶ Frank Baughman-Hayer has posted this interesting piece on deaths in the works of Dickens:
- ▶ http://www.dearmr dickens.com/?page_id=640
- ▶ In this listing, concerned with deaths of principal characters, the body-count in *The Pickwick Papers* ranks low. However, if one looks at all the REFERENCES to death in *The Pickwick Papers*, the body-count soars. For instance, almost all of Sam Weller's Wellerisms are concerned with death, in one way or another. There are deaths in the interpolated tales, such as that of the drunken clown, and indeed an entire ship sinks in one of the tales, with a huge loss of life. Professor Bob Pattin gave the keynote speech on deaths in *The Pickwick Papers* at the Dickens Universe Conference in 2007, and he reeled off a CATALOGUE of deaths in the novel. Indeed, by this method of counting, *The Pickwick Papers* is almost certainly the most death-obsessed of Dickens's novels.

July 20



- ▶ Continuing the discussion of Sam Weller...
- ▶ Professor Michael Slater, in the *Wall Street Journal*, said that I had "missed the point", and proceeded to name Sam Weller as the reason for the success of *The Pickwick Papers*. Many other people say much the same. But although Sam Weller's appearance may well have been the catalyst for *Pickwick's* initial success, that does not mean that *The Pickwick Papers* was just about Sam Weller. Sam Weller was an **INGREDIENT** in *Pickwick's* success - but an ingredient is not the same as a recipe.



- I might put it like this. When Batman was given a sidekick in the form of Robin, the sales of the comics featuring the two heroes soared, just as sales of *The Pickwick Papers* soared when Sam Weller became Mr Pickwick's sidekick - but that does not mean that the *Batman* series WAS Robin.



- ▶ Also, the evidence suggests that after the initial impact of Sam Weller, Mr Pickwick was the character the public truly cared about, not Sam. A strong indicator of this is the amount of memorabilia which features Mr Pickwick versus the amount which features Sam. There IS Sam Weller memorabilia - quite a lot of it - but it is DWARFED by the amount of memorabilia featuring Mr Pickwick. My friend Nuria Reina Bachot, the Spanish translator of *The Railway Children*, sent me this picture of a Mr Pickwick Royal Doulton jug last week - no sign of Sam there.



- And it is the same with advertising and branding: Mr Pickwick has been called the most powerful advertising tool in history, and his image has been used to promote countless products. You do find advertisements featuring Sam Weller, but nowhere near as many as those featuring Mr Pickwick. Even today, when Pickwick is decline, you can still see the occasional Mr Pickwick product or service. And when The Pickwick Papers celebrated its centenary in 1936, Mr Pickwick was declared to be the most famous literary character in history, not Sam. Entire towns came into existence called Pickwick - I am not aware of any towns called 'Weller'.



- ▶ Perhaps the reason for the greater long-term popularity of Mr Pickwick over Sam Weller is that Sam is, essentially, a walking joke book, based upon his Wellerisms. This was a fine way of provoking initial interest in *The Pickwick Papers* - but jokes eventually wear a bit thin. Mr Pickwick, on the other hand, is an embodiment of the joys of eating and drinking, to name just two of his prominent quantities, and those joys have a more enduring appeal.
- ▶ I shall make some final remarks about Sam Weller tomorrow.

July 20



Review: "Death and Mr. Pickwick, A Novel" by Stephen Jarvis - The Buffalo News

Death and Mr. Pickwick, a morality Stephen Jarvis wrote, "Drops and divides to pieces." (SPOILS) Michael D. Langford (Charles Dickens) was outside of the picture. BUFFALO NEWS.COM

- ▶ Frank Boudner-Hayes has found this new review of Death and Mr. Pickwick:
- ▶ <http://www.buffalonews.com/life-arts/book-reviews/review-death-and-mr-pickwick-a-novel-by-stephen-jarvis-20150719>
- ▶ This is what Frank says: "Another US review which is much more positive about the novel. Strangely though, the reviewer seems to misidentify the core argument of the novel which is not that Seymour originated The Pickwick Papers (everyone familiar with that novel knows that the project was initiated by the illustrator) but that he was responsible for much more of the novel than he is given credit for and that this was due to Dickens, perhaps at Forster's urging, deliberately erasing the true nature of Seymour's influence on the novel."

July 21



- ▶ Concluding the discussion of Sam Weller...
- ▶ What about Sam's distinctive way of speaking, his "as-the-so-and-so-said" expressions? Could Seymour have been responsible for giving Sam this trait?
- ▶ Well, the first thing to note is that the phrases have a parallel in Sancho Panza's use of proverbs, so if Seymour did conceive of a Sancho Panza figure in *Pickwick*, there was already a template for a character with some sort of distinctive speech habit.



- ▶ The particular form that Sam's speech took, the "Wellensm", was already circulating in London prior to the creation of *Pickwick*, popularised by the actor Sam Vale, whose name, when pronounced in the London way with V-W swapping, would be "Sam Wale", which is remarkably close to Sam Weller. In *Death and Mr Pickwick*, I have given Dickens the benefit of the doubt, and made him the person who imports Sam Vale's speech into *The Pickwick Papers* - and the reason I did so is that there are a couple of examples of Dickens using Sam Vale-like phrases prior to *Pickwick*. However, there are tantalising hints that Seymour may have been responsible for importing the speech, not Dickens.



- There is a book which Seymour illustrated, *The Reciter's Album*, *The Actor's Utility Book* which has a portrait of Sam Vale at the front. (There does not seem to be a copy available online, so I do not have the image available.) Unfortunately the portrait is unsigned - I have a vague recollection that it bears the engraver's name, but not the artist. If this portrait was by Seymour, like the other pictures in the book, then it strongly suggests that Seymour met Sam Vale, in order to do the portrait. In any case, Seymour did illustrate some plays that Vale had appeared in, such as *The Moor of Southwark Ferry*. So it is possible that Seymour encountered Sam Vale speech before Dickens.



"Who's in, who's out?"

- ▶ But also, the pictures in Seymour's series *New Readings of Old Authors*, have a certain similarity to Wellensisms. In this series, Seymour would take a phrase from Shakespeare or Byron, and give it a new, unexpected, visual interpretation. Here, for instance, Seymour applies the process to a line from *King Lear*. One could easily imagine Sam Weller saying "Who's in, who's out - as the driver said to his passengers, when his vehicle crashed."
- ▶ As I said, I gave Dickens the benefit of the doubt about Sam's speech - but I have a strong suspicion that I may have given Dickens too much credit here.

July 21



"Death and Mr. Pickwick" Q & A
with the Author - The Fine Books
Blog

https://www.finebooksmagazine.com/fine_books_blog/2015/07/death-and-mr-pickwick-q-a-with-the-author.html#.VaCHMTQEels

- ▶ Peter Stadlera found this Q & A with me before I did!
- ▶ https://www.finebooksmagazine.com/fine_books_blog/2015/07/death-and-mr-pickwick-q-a-with-the-author.html#.VaCHMTQEels.facebook

July 21



- ▶ And here is Peter Stadlera with some background information on a location in *Death and Mr Pickwick*:
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we hear of a pub with an impressive name: The Northumberland Arms in Pentonville. I saw that pub from the outside when meeting Stephen in April and now I've collected some background information about it.



- ▶ "Pentonville was perhaps the first new town or suburb in England to have the French suffix that became so widespread in the nineteenth century, especially in North America—though not in London. In its early days the name carried very different connotations from those it later acquired. The name Pentonville seems to have been coined about 1787 to describe the suburb that had been evolving slowly over the previous twenty or so years on the estate of Henry Penton, MP of Winchester. Its choice, in the Francophilic years before 1789, was perhaps a one-upping response to Somers Town, nearly adjacent to the west and begun in earnest in 1786.



- ▶ "A name was certainly needed, for Penton's land was in an ambiguous location—mostly in the northern division of the parish of St James, Clerkenwell, and partly in the parish of St Mary, Islington. But while it did include a small area identifiable as a section of the roadside settlement of Islington itself—part of Islington High Street and what is now Liverpool Road—Pentonville was essentially something separate and distinct. It stood on the high ground well to the north of old Clerkenwell, facing the city across the fields and reservoirs of the New River Company, with the thirty-year-old New Road, hitherto a lonely bypass, forming its main highway.



- "By the late nineteenth century, the area around and to the north of Pentonville Road was firmly established as a busy urban quarter with a multitude of productive activities, often highly specialized, in warehouses of converted houses, sheds and workshops. Old Pentonville today may be regarded as a lost suburb of London, for the remains of the first-generation buildings are few. They are largely confined to Chapel Market and the east side of Penton Street. Saving the rather younger terraces of Northdown Street, nothing of the once decent residential streets further west remains but the pattern of the roads themselves, and that not in its entirety.



- "And Northumberland has a history of revolt and rebellion against the government, as seen in the Rising of the North (1569-1570) against Elizabeth I of England. These revolts were usually led by the Earls of Northumberland, the Percy family.
- "Northumberland played a key role in the industrial revolution from the 18th century onwards. As of 2014 Northumberland remains largely rural. As the least-densely populated county in England, it commands much less influence in British affairs than in times past. In recent years the county has had considerable growth in tourism due to its scenic beauty and the abundant evidence of its historical significance."

July 21



The Page 69 Test: "Death and Mr. Pickwick"

Copyright 2011 by Peter Straub

- ▶ Once again the great Peter Stadlera has found something *Death-and-Mr-Pickwick*-related online before I did!
- ▶ <http://page69test.blogspot.de/2015/07/death-and-mr-pickwick.html>
- ▶ This piece appeared on a book blog, where authors are asked to look at page 69 of their novels, and say how that page compares to the rest of the book, and whether it is typical or untypical of the work as a whole.
- ▶ I can say, quite definitively, that Page 69 is *not* typical of *Death and Mr. Pickwick*, and I don't even have to look at the page to know that. The reason is that there is no typical page in the novel. That was deliberate.



- One of the reasons why *The Pickwick Papers* itself succeeded was that it took readers on a long, rolling journey, in which they were never quite sure where they would go next. I wanted my novel to parallel *Pickwick*, so one moment we go down into a basement to encounter a mad clown in a straitjacket...



- ...the next moment we are in a debtors' prison to see a man who has spent thirty-two despairing years within its walls...



- ...Oh, and then we witness the bloody slaughter of an elephant.



- Nor is the timescale confined to the nineteenth century, when *Pickwick* was created. One section is set in ancient Celtic Britain...



- ▶ ...another is set on the day that John Lennon was assassinated in 1980...



- ...and there is a narrator who is a citizen of the twenty-first century.



- Or take characters. There is a huge and diverse cast, as was the case with *The Pickwick Papers*. And, as the main character shoots himself midway, there is a large chunk of the book where the main character does not even appear.



- ▶ You might ask: "How can such a rambling novel possibly work?" All I can say is that it worked for *The Pickwick Papers*. Indeed, "worked" doesn't begin to convey that novel's success. *The Pickwick Papers* was, quite simply, the greatest literary phenomenon in history. For almost a century, *Pickwick* was the most famous novel in the world, with probably only *The Bible* having a greater circulation. In my view, *The Pickwick Papers* also has the greatest backstory of any work of literature. A story of colossal success, conspiracy, and suicidal genius.



- And page 69? Actually, It tells of a famous actress who caused a stampede of theatregoers, desperate to get into the theatre - nearly crushing a painter to death - and of a deluded beggarwoman who claimed to be the actress's abandoned sister. Typically untypical.

July 21



- ▶ Phiz's great-great-granddaughter, Valerie Browne Lester, has just sent me this photo and message: "I was in the Hingham, Mass. public library yesterday, and Lol! there was your book. To prove it, I am sending you a photo taken of me, my favorite young librarian Joe Maynard, and D & Mr P. Bravo! Much love, Val"

July 22



- ▶ Time is running out to get your photos to me if you wish to enter *The Great Death and Mr Pickwick Photo Competition* because tomorrow is the last day for sending in your pics.
- ▶ Photography of course hangs like an executioner's axe over the era of Seymour and the print-shops, as it offered a new way of reproducing images. Towards the end of *Death and Mr Pickwick*, I do indeed mention the artist R W Buss using a photograph of Dickens in order to accurately depict the writer in the painting *Dickens's Dream*. Buss probably used the photo by George Herbert Watkins shown here.



- In the novel, I also briefly mention the artist's daughter, Frances Mary Buss, who was an educational pioneer, and the founder of the North London Collegiate School.



- I went to the school to examine their archives on the Buss family, and I have to say that it was one of the most rewarding - indeed, one might use the word 'exciting' - research experiences of all. For the school holds some of R. W. Buss's preliminary sketches for *Dickens's Dream*. I looked at the little pencil drawings of Sam Weller and Mr Pickwick, and I could imagine Buss's desperation to complete the painting before he died, thereby proving that he was worthy to be Seymour's successor, and so wipe out the ignominy of being remembered as "the Pickwick failure".



- Of course, he did not manage to complete the picture in time, but the irony is that *Dickens's Dream* seems all the more powerful for being unfinished, as though Dickens's characters are on the point of coming into existence. It was Buss's destiny to be remembered not as the artist who failed at *Pickwick*, but as the artist who created probably the most famous image of Dickens of all. And that seems fair.

July 22



- ▶ After posting about the Buss painting Dickens's Dream today, I was delighted to see that, by coincidence, Peter Stadler had mentioned that painting too! Here is Peter's post:
- ▶ "Samuel Luke Fildes (1844-1927) was born in Liverpool, England. He studied at the Mechanics Institute in Liverpool, the Warrington School of Art, the Kensington Art School in London and the Royal Academy. He began his career as a sought-after book and magazine illustrator. His work appeared in the *Morning Post*, *Fox's Book of Martyrs*, *The Illustrated London News*, *Good Words* and a number of other periodicals. Later in his career he produced a large number of caricatures for *Kent's Fair*. These drawings were signed "ELF". John Everett Millais (1829-1896) was so impressed with the work of young Fildes, that he showed Fildes' engravings to his friend Charles Dickens.



- "Dickens had lost his previous illustrator to infirmity and was seeking an artist who could bring his words to life. Dickens commissioned Fildes to illustrate *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. Twelve illustrations had already been completed when Dickens invited Fildes to join him at Gad's Hill, Dickens's home, in order to see first hand the inspiration for the book. With his bags packed and about to start his journey to visit Dickens, Fildes learned of the author's death. Dickens's family invited Fildes to come and finish the work he and Dickens had started. While there, Fildes drew *The Empty Chair*, *Gad's Hill - Month of June 1870* showing Dickens's empty desk and chair. The drawing was published in the Christmas 1870 edition of *The Graphic*. Thousands of prints of *The Empty Chair* were sold and many English families hung the print in their homes.



- "Flides would later paint a watercolor of the drawing. The drawing was also republished several times to mark the passing of prominent personalities.



- ▶ "The concept of *The Empty Chair* depicting the absence or loss of someone was an inspiration to later artists including Vincent Van Gogh (- who, writing to his brother Theo, said 'I have another splendid one, a drawing by Fildes, Dickens's *Empty Chair* from *The Graphic* of 70.') and Robert William Buss, (1804-1875) who painted Dickens's *Dream*, depicting Dickens surrounded in his study by the characters of his imagination. Here we see Van Gogh's picture Gauguin's *Armchair*."

July 22



SleuthSayers: The Case Against
Charles Dickens

By Judith G. Thompson

- ▶ Here's a review of *Death and Mr Pickwick* on the SleuthSayers site:
- ▶ <http://www.sleuthsayers.org/2015/07/the-case-against-charles-dickens.html>

July 23



- ▶ I have spoken previously about prototypes for Mr Pickwick and Sam Weller which are to be found in Seymour's work, adding weight to the idea that he was the creator of these characters, as stated by Ebenezer Landells, who was working for Pickwick's publishers Chapman and Hall at the very time Pickwick appeared. But after the artist's death there appeared two scenes in Pickwick which have prototypes in Seymour's work as well. Compare Seymour's picture of an arbour in *Sketches by Seymour*, with both Phiz's drawing of the arbour scene in *Pickwick*, and with Buzz's suppressed drawing of the same scene.





- Also compare Buss's picture of the cricket scene in *Pickwick*, with...



- ...Seymour's cricket scene in *Sketches by Seymour*.



- ▶ To be fair, the existence of Seymourian prototypes has been noticed by academics before, and there is a sort of 'Oh well, maybe Dickens was influenced by Seymour' attitude. But there is something more than just influence here. The labour scene in *Pickwick* takes place because Tapman has been injured in a rook-shooting accident, and so he is cared for by Rachael Wandle, and their romance blossoms - and the crucial point is that rook-shooting only takes place at a specific time of year.
- ▶ According to traditional country lore, the best day for shooting rooks is May 13th, when the young rooks emerge from their nests. There is a narrow window for rook-shooting, on either side of the 13th, and if you shoot rooks too far away from this date, the quality of the rook-meat changes. Now May 13th is an especially significant date in *The Pickwick Papers*...



- ▶ It is the very day that Mr Pickwick and his club set forth on their expedition to see the world, after the meeting of the club on May 12th, and just a few days later they are involved in rook-shooting. This strongly suggests that in *The Pickwick Papers* the start of the expedition was not on an arbitrary date, but was deliberately chosen, to set up the circumstances for the rook-shooting accident. If Seymour was in charge of the Pickwick project at the beginning, then the likelihood is that he planned the rook-shooting accident, and the arbour scene emerged not merely because Dickens was 'influenced' by Seymour, but because he was TOLD to include the scene, and he continued obeying the instruction even after Seymour's death, using another artist to execute Seymour's wishes.
- ▶ To my knowledge, no one has ever pointed this out before. It is why I decided to have Gumpy and Mr Imbecible eating rook pie at the start of *Death* and Mr Pickwick.

July 23



- ▶ Here is a great video of Dory, the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* parrot, posted by Michael Segers.
- ▶ <https://www.facebook.com/msegers/videos/vb.5369214407101532/16468521441/?type=2&theater>
- ▶ As Michael says: "Dory takes very seriously his position as the official parrot of the great novel *Death and Mr Pickwick*. So, he is upset about the terrible review in the *New York Times*, not terrible because it didn't speak well of his favorite novel, but terrible because the critic did not seem to have as much understanding of the novel as Dory has. (Of course, African gray parrots are known for their intelligence, and not all *New York Times* critics are.) He is using one of his favorite toys to demonstrate what he would like to do to that critic."

July 23



- ▶ And here is another post about Dory, regarding the Great Death and *Mr Pickwick* photo competition. TODAY IS THE FINAL CHANCE TO GET YOUR ENTRIES IN.
- ▶ Here's Michael Segers again:
- ▶ "Have you got your entry for the *Death and Mr Pickwick* photo competition in yet? Scenes involving eating and drinking are eligible, and Dory is demonstrating by chowing down on a bowl of spaghetti. Since I took this photo with the tablet that has our copy of the novel on it, however, I can't include an image of the novel, so this would not be eligible."

July 23



- ▶ Peter Stadlera has just posted this about Thomas Noon Talfourd, who appears as a character in *Death and Mr Pickwick*:
- ▶ "Sir Thomas Noon Talfourd (1795-1854) was a judge and author. Talfourd held a place of some prominence in the legal, political, and literary world when Dickens became acquainted with him and, in 1837, dedicated to him the book publication of *Pickwick*. The dedication, wrote Dickens, was a tribute to Talfourd's important work in the matter of copyright legislation; it was also a token of Dickens's 'fervent admiration' of Talfourd's fine qualities of head and heart, and 'a memorial of the most gratifying friendship I have ever contracted'.

I am

My Dear Talfourd

Ever Faithfully Yours

Charles Dickens

- ▶ "'Dickens had no friend', wrote Forster, 'to whom he was more attached than he was to Talfourd'. The association of the two men was frequent. Talfourd was vice-chairman at the Pickwick celebration dinner and took part also in celebrations commemorating the publications of other books by Dickens. The two writers presented each other copies of their works, and each expressed high admiration of the other's writing. Talfourd, in presenting Dickens a copy of the privately printed *Ice*, wrote of him as 'the subtlest and the most general delineator of human manners and affections who has arisen among us since the days of Fielding'; his friendship with Dickens was to him 'one of the greatest blessings and honors' of his life (in *Pilgrim Letters*, I, 686). Talfourd also addressed a eulogistic sonnet to Dickens about *Oliver Twist*. At Dickens's request, he contributed a sonnet to *The Pic-Nic Papers*, 1841, the volume brought out for the benefit of John Macrone's widow.



- "Talfound served as Dickens's counsel in the suit that Dickens brought in 1844 against publishers who plagiarised his books. Various commentators have suggested that Dickens modelled Traddles of *Copperfield* in part on Talfound. On Talfound's death, Dickens published in *Household Words*, March 25, 1854, his tribute to "this upright judge and good man"."

July 24



The author's affectionate sketch of the original Mr. Pickwick.

- ▶ Yesterday, I spoke about Tupman, and the evidence that Seymour set up the rock-shooting accident, which in turn led to the arbour scene. Here are some pictures of Tupman from a later edition of *Pickwick*, by the artist Cecil Aldin.
- ▶ The *Pickwick Papers* is, of course, concerned with the comedy of incompetence - that motif is even flagged up in Seymour's wrapper picture, where Winkle is portrayed as an incompetent shooter, and Mr Pickwick as an incompetent angler. Tupman is an incompetent lover, who sees himself as Casanova. But take a moment to consider how you would portray such a character.



Illustration of Mr. Pickwick, from the 'Course of True Love Never Runs Smooth'

- ▶ Obviously, Tupman is not going to get anywhere if he attempts to woo a "babe". The only woman he is likely to have any success with would be a desperate ageing spinster, like Rachael Wardle - which is what happens in the arbour scene. But the point is, such a relationship itself cannot survive: if it did, it would be a potentially charming "autumn romance" - and that would mark Tupman out as a successful lover, not incompetent. One is inevitably drawn to the conclusion that Tupman must love Rachael Wardle.
- ▶ Now, in *Death and Mr Pickwick*, I show how the evidence indicates that Seymour invented the duelling scene in Rochester, arising from the military ball, in which the obviously impecunious Jingle emerges as a character who would trifle with a wealthy older woman's affections. Having invented such a character, you have exactly the sort of person who would make a play for the wealthy Rachael Wardle - and take her away from Tupman.



"He must have been just asleep," whispered Mr. Tugman.

- It suddenly becomes very plausible indeed that Seymour conceived of the elopement scene, in which Jingle and Rachael drive away in a coach, pursued by Mr Pickwick and Mr Wardle - and, as with the arbour scene, Dickens got another artist, Phiz, to execute Seymour's instructions after the suicide. Is there evidence to indicate that Seymour took a previous interest in illustrating elopement? Yes, indeed there is.



- Seymour did a series called *The Heiress*, which consists of six large plates, with multiple images on each plate, in which a wealthy woman is courted by a feckless, impecunious army officer who is pursued by debt-collectors. Here is Seymour portraying an elopement, with a marriage at Gretna Green, the traditional place for runaway couples to tie the knot.

July 24



- Death and Mr Pickwick is one of two books in New York magazine's "Go Set" section, which carries suggestions for things to see, hear, watch and read. (The other book being Harper Lee's *Go Set a Watchman*, please see what the magazine says)
- Stephen Janak's *Death and Mr Pickwick*
- Charles would be proud
- Historical fiction always contends with the problem of how to fit research and hindsight, scientifically, into an in-the-moment narrative. Janak meets the challenge magnificently in this alternate history of Dickens's *The Pickwick Papers*. His main character is a researcher hell bent on proving that Dickens's first character was stolen from the now forgotten illustrator Robert Seymour. In the process, he unlocks the social canvas of 1830s England in its beauty, tragedy, glory, evoking a knack for plot and character sketches (and serial digressing) his dad would likely admire

July 24



- ▶ Peter Stadler: "In *Death and Mr Pickwick*, Smith, Payne and Smiths moved their operations to the South Sea House. As that's a very exotic name for a house, we'll have a look at its background."



- ▶ "The South Sea Company was established in 1711, promoted by London financiers John Blunt and George Caswall, and backed by Robert Harley, Lord Treasurer, who saw the South Sea Company as a Tory competitor for the Whig-supported Bank of England. The company was promised a monopoly of all trade to the Spanish colonies in South America in exchange for taking over and consolidating the national debt raised by the War of Spanish Succession. The company was never successful in the South Sea trade but profited by convincing the government to convert successive portions of the national debt into South Sea Company shares.



- "Shares rose tremendously in value, and all sorts of companies appeared - some optimistic, some fraudulent, some lunatic. One of the most famous 'bubbles' was Puckle's Machine Company, for discharging round and square cannon-balls and bullets, and making a total revolution in the art of war. Another fraud that was very successful was that of the 'Globe Permits' as they were called. They were nothing more than square pieces of playing cards, on which was the impression of a seal, in wax, bearing the sign of the 'Globe Tavern', in the neighbourhood of Exchange Alley, with the inscription of 'Sail-cloth Permits'".

July 25



- ▶ Results of The Great Death and Mr Pickwick Photo Competition - Day 1
- ▶ I can now announce that the winner of the "Eating and Drinking" category of the photo competition is.....Jamie Johnston, from Carrickfergus in Northern Ireland, with these five photos. Here is a man who truly understands the Pickwickian spirit.



- Here we see Jamie enjoying "Gin o'clock."



► "Wine and Music"



- ▶ He says the chicken reminds him of Rip Torn!
- ▶ Well done, Jamie!





- There were some other great entries too. For an excellent, subtle and unusual interpretation of the theme, we see Gary Lambert's photo showing Death and Mr Pickwick in an industrial dishwasher, suggesting that eating and drinking has taken place. Gary remarks: "I chose the industrial one because I thought it better reflected the times when Death and Mr Pickwick was set - well parts of it anyway (Dark satanic mills and all that)." He also said that he purposefully "hid" the book behind the knives, as some Dickensians will probably want to stab me in the back over the book. I think the dishwasher should become the official Death and Mr Pickwick dishwasher.



- ▶ Next up is Phiz's great-great-granddaughter Valerie Browne Lester, shown here with her son Toby, grilling salmon at a family barbecue. It is a great honour to have the family of the third original *Pickwick Papers* artist represented in the competition.



- And then a superb entry by Simon Carmio, from Schagen in the Netherlands, showing a giant ice-cream cone! Simon did many fine photos, in all categories, as we shall see over the next few days.



- ▶ Simon also submitted three additional pictures on the theme of food and drink, and he explains: "The snack is called "bitterballen" in Dutch. It is bread-crumbed and deep-fried beef ragout. The word "bitter" or "bittertje" in this case doesn't refer to the flavour, but is a Dutch word meaning any strong alcoholic drink containing a herbal extract."
- ▶ Well done, and thank you everyone for your entries!



July 26



- ▶ Results of The Great Death and Mr Pickwick Photo Competition - Day 2
- ▶ The winner of category 2 - which involved taking a photo of *Death and Mr Pickwick* in an unusual, interesting or exotic location - is...Simon Carmio, from Schagen in the Netherlands. Simon has submitted a *Pickwickian* photo-tour of the Schagen area, with many fine photos. I particularly liked these statues on the bench.



- This is another favourite of mine, by Simon.



- I also very much liked Simon's pictures where *Death and Mr Pickwick* appears huge.



- So let's continue Simon's tour of Schagen....



















- Well done, Simon! Thank you.



- Michael Segers submitted a photo which definitely shows *Death* and *Mr Pickwick* in an unusual location - inside the house of Dory, the official *Death* and *Mr Pickwick* parrot!



- ▶ And then Penny James submitted a photo from Texas, remarking: "If Texas is anything, it's unusual."
- ▶ Thanks, everyone!

July 26



- ▶ UPDATE ON AVAILABILITY OF *DEATH AND MR PICKWICK* IN CANADA
- ▶ People have experienced some difficulty in getting the book in Canada. Some copies have definitely been shipped, but obviously not enough. I have spoken to Random House, and there will now be an "official" Canadian launch of *Death and Mr Pickwick* on September 22. Wolverine isn't happy that he will have to wait a little longer...

July 26



Pictures: Look inside Rochester's Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel - a hundred years ago!

View of the hotel pictures in the gallery. Pictures: Look inside Rochester's Royal Victoria and Bull Hotel - a hundred years ago! - in Rochester, and feature them! <http://www.madisonandmedwaynews.co.uk/>

- ▶ Here is a great series of pictures showing the hotel which features in both *The Pickwick Papers* and *Death and Mr Pickwick*. Thanks to the Rochester Bridge Trust for pointing this out.
- ▶ <http://www.madisonandmedwaynews.co.uk/pictures/Pictures-Look-inside-Rochester-s-Royal-Victoria/pictures-27473068-detail/pictures.html#12>
- ▶ Of particular interest here is the staircase, which featured in Seymour's picture in the first serial part of *The Pickwick Papers*. By the time this picture was taken, some parts of the staircase had been replaced, but it follows the same path... I stayed at the hotel myself when I was researching *Death and Mr Pickwick*. Note that originally the hotel was called *The Bull* - the 'Royal Victoria' was added when Victoria stayed there. (I have a vague recollection that she was forced to stop overnight at the hotel because weather conditions were too atrocious to proceed in a journey.)

July 26



Ten Books Making News This Week

On Sale's *White Paper* (Hogarth) (The continuing Hogarth (see month surrounding the July 1st publication date of On Sale's *White Paper*) indicates the title is the most recent book of the year. See also

LETHAL 1000

- ▶ Frank Bouchier-Hayes has found that *Death and Mr Pickwick* is one of "Ten Books Making News This Week."
- ▶ <http://lithub.com/ten-books-making-news-this-week/>

July 27



- ▶ Results of the Great Death and Mr Pickwick Photo Competition - Day 3.
- ▶ The winner of Category 3, for taking a photo of Death and Mr Pickwick in some location which has relevance to either The Pickwick Papers or Death and Mr Pickwick, or which features Pickwickiana or DeathandMrPickwickiana is... The Rochester Bridge Trust!
- ▶ They submitted an outstanding photograph which manages to capture the tragedy of the Seymour family across three generations. For here is a Seddon chair - made in the very factory where Robert Seymour's father, Henry, worked - on which the book is placed, and the book's central character is of course Robert Seymour, and beyond is Rochester Bridge, which is not only featured in The Pickwick Papers (and is the very place where Osmond Jermy contemplates the delights of drawing) but is connected too to the tragic life of Robert Seymour's son. An amazing photo!



- ▶ The Trust also submitted another photo with the bridge foregrounded by the book, which is very good too.
- ▶ Do take a look at the Rochester Bridge Trust's website:
- ▶ <http://www.rbt.org.uk/>



- And there are two other excellent photos, either of which would have been a worthy winner if the Rochester Bridge Trust had not submitted its three-generational picture. First, there is the photo submitted by Martin Hulsenboom, the translator of *Dr Syntax* into Dutch. Martin's picture shows one of the key objects in *Death and Mr Pickwick* - a Dr Syntax cane. Martin owns a swordstick version of the cane, and it is shown here against a background of books which have relevance to *Death and Mr Pickwick*, including *Life in London* and *Forster's Life of Dickens*. Brilliant, Martin!



- And then there is the wonderful image submitted by the winner of category 2, Simon Carmio - for here is *Death and Mr Pickwick* shown against a background of Pickwick products, made by the manufacturers of Pickwick tea!
- Well done, all three of you! Tomorrow I shall announce the winner of category 4.

July 27



- ▶ Here is Peter Stadlera on The Angel inn, and the town of Bury St Edmunds, which are featured in both *The Pickwick Papers* and *Death and Mr Pickwick*. As I have described in a previous post, my mother died in Bury St Edmunds, and I experienced the bizarre coincidence of staying in the Angel Inn on the day my mother died.
- ▶ "In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we read about 'The Angel inn, where Mr Pickwick stayed. Yes, chapter 14 of *The Pickwick Papers* is so full of incident in Bury St Edmunds - and the Angel - that Dickens titled it: 'Too full of adventure to be briefly described.'



- ▶ "'Beg your pardon, sir,' said Sam, suddenly breaking off in his loquacious discourse. 'Is this Bury St. Edmunds?' 'It is,' replied Mr. Pickwick.'
- ▶ "'The coach rattled through the well-paved streets of a handsome little town, of thriving and cleanly appearance, and stopped before a large inn situated in a wide open street, nearly facing the old abbey. 'And this,' said Mr. Pickwick, looking up, 'is the Angel! We alight here, Sam. But some caution is necessary. Order a private room, and do not mention my name. You understand.'" In half an hour, (with Sam's help) Mr. Pickwick was seated at a very satisfactory dinner.'



- "Later Mr. Pickwick was confined to his room in the inn with chronic rheumatism and here he received the news from Dodson and Fogg that Mrs Bardell intended to bring an action against him for breach of promise. It was here in the stable-yard of the Angel that Sam Weller encountered the mulberry-liveried Job Trotter who made Mr. Pickwick once more the victim of the devious...



- ▶ "...Jingle. Dickens knew the Angel well. He first stayed here in 1838 when he was reporting on the Suffolk Parliamentary Elections for the Morning Chronicle. He stayed here again in 1859 when, as an established and famous author, he gave readings in the Athenaeum which forms one side of this beautiful Georgian square. From the inn in he wrote: 'Last night I read Copperfield at Bury St Edmunds to a very fine audience. I don't think a word - not to say an idea - was lost'. Following another reading tour and whilst staying in the Angel in 1861 he wrote: 'We had a splendid hall last night, and I think Nickleby tops all the readings! Somehow it seems to have got in it, by accident, exactly the qualities best suited to the purpose, and it went last night, not only with roars, but with general hilarity and pleasure that I have never surpassed'.



- ▶ The Angel, on the old foreground slope known as Angel Hill, was built as a hospice for the Abbey of Edmundsbury in 1453. The present Georgian building dates from 1799. Today there is a warm relaxed atmosphere enhanced by an interesting collection of antiques and art.



July 28



- ▶ Results of the Great Death and Mr Pickwick Photo Competition - Day 4.
- ▶ And so we come to the last category - "Anything goes". The rules of the competition allowed me to award additional prizes at my discretion, and two of the entries seemed equally deserving of the top spot in this category, though very different, and so I decided to name them as joint winners, and each will receive a signed copy of the book.
- ▶ First up is the entry by Tom McElhenry, of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. I thought the "Pick Death" here was extraordinarily haunting, as though Robert Seymour were being whispered to by a demon of suicide, urging him to raise the gun to his heart. Honestly, I can almost hear those words. Fantastic, Tom.



- The other joint winner is Sir Pelzi, the official *Death* and *Mr Pickwick* cat, for this sequence of four photos. We see Sir Pelzi closely looking at a post of mine about the Dylan song *A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall*.



- Sir Pelzi commented that he was happy just to sit listening to the tune, which made him feel like singing and dancing.



- Sir Pelzi wanted to make it clear that *Death and Mr Pickwick* is a novel you simply want to bite into because of its wholesome content.



- ▶ Then he looked up one of his favourite passages about *Matthew-Methuselah* the fox hunter. After that the book fell from the desk.
- ▶ Well done, Sir Pelzi, for this great entry in the competition!



- Next up, are two fine submissions by Ben Shres, from London. The one with the American flag I thought particularly striking, and truly reflected the fact that the competition celebrated the American publication of the novel.





- Then, we come to the entry by Simon Carmio, the winner of category 2. Simon comments: "This is Ginger, our neighbour's cat, who is here more often than in her own house. She has developed a passion for *Pickwick* as you can see!"



- And last, but definitely not least, we come to Beryl Cook, from Buffalo Grove, Illinois, who sent two pics showing Gypsy, her cockatiel. Beryl says: "Gypsy is so excited over the U.S. publication of *Death and Mr. Pickwick*, she is asking the Travelocity gnome if he can take her to the UK to personally congratulate you and ask if she can be *Death and Mr. Pickwick's* official cockatiel." I say yes!



- So Gypsy is now the official *Death and Mr Pickwick* cockatiel. We look forward to seeing more pics of Gypsy in the future, Beryl.
- So we come to the end of the competition. Thanks to everyone who sent in entries.

July 28



- ▶ The text of *The Pickwick Papers* is tied to specific locations, and so that novel always suggests potential excursions. The great Peter Stadlera, in this post, shows how *Death and Mr Pickwick* offers the same possibilities.
- ▶ “In *Death and Mr Pickwick* we come to know about ‘Beechen Cliff, where Bladud took his pigs’.





- ▶ "If you go to Bath, don't miss the opportunity to visit this great landscape. Beechen Cliff Wood, when combined with the adjacent Alexandra Park provides an example of both a relatively demanding walk and one that includes several examples of mature beech trees and a mature ash tree.



July 29



- ▶ In *The Pickwick Papers*, the corrupt election at the fictional town of Estlinswill, shown here in Phil's illustration, was for many years mentioned in political discourse - and Estlinswill became a byword for electoral malpractice.
- ▶ Although undoubtedly the portrayal of Estlinswill was informed by Dickens's work as a parliamentary reporter, it should be noted that election scenes were probably included in Seymour's original scheme for the book, as the pre-publication *Pickwick* prospectus notes that elections will be featured among the scenes that 'enliven a country place and at which different traits of character may be observed and recognised.' And indeed, one would EXPECT Seymour to include election scenes, as he was the most prolific political cartoonist in the country.



- Here, though, is a Seymour illustration for a non-parliamentary election, which appeared in the script for *The Mayor of Gorroff*, by Samuel Foote.



- ▶ At one point, I thought I might include Foote as a character in an inlet story in *Death and Mr Pickwick*. Foote was accused of being gay, and although he probably wasn't, the stress and strain of the accusation, at a time when being gay was a capital offence, almost certainly shortened his life. So any authentic biography of Foote HAS to cover this event in some detail. Yet there is an early twentieth century account of Foote's life which completely glosses over the specifics of the accusation, merely stating that Foote was accused of a crime...
- ▶ When I read that account, I became aware of how homophobic taboos could stop homosexuality from even being mentioned - and the account was written by an ACADEMIC, whom one would expect to be concerned with the truth. If Seymour was gay, as various indications suggest, then this could be another reason why so little attention has been devoted to the artist, dubbed 'The Shakespeare of Caricature'.

July 29



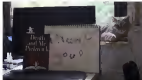
- ▶ Following on from Sir Pelzi's victory in the *Great Death and Mr Pickwick* Photo Competition...
- ▶ "Here it is, Stephen, the celebration post of me and Sir Pelzi..."



- "Sir Pelzi putting his favourite novel in the spotlight...



- "...attentively listening when I fully read your post aloud of him being awarded a prize..."



- ▶ "...him personally saying thank you Stephen..."



- "...then the director and me immediately went to the computer to prepare this post; well, Sir Pelzi got a bit tired after the whole ceremony."



July 30



- Last Saturday, I attended the Maidenhead Beer and Cider Festival, organised by my local branch of CAMRA, the Campaign for Real Ale.



- Maidenhead CAMRA already has some connection with *Death and Mr Pickwick*, because the current issue of the branch's magazine, *CamraAngle*, has an article on *Death and Mr Pickwick*. (You can download the magazine from <https://www.swmcamra.org.uk/magazine.php> The article is in the Summer 2015 issue.)



- However, when I got through the festival's doors (of course I was already waiting there, keen and thirsty, long before the doors opened) one of the first beers I saw was called *Park Life*, and this is the title of a song by Blur, who are briefly mentioned in *Death and Mr Pickwick*.



- Chewing over the thought of *Blur*, I wondered whether it was possible to choose only beers and ciders which had some connection to my novel.



- I sat down with my pint of *Park Life* and the festival's programme which listed over one hundred beers as well as twenty ciders, and discovered that it was indeed possible!



- So, in between snacking, here you will find me drinking the likes of N1 (an Islington beer, with the postcode area of Canonbury Tower, where Seymour lived)...



...Fat Lad's MILD (reminiscent of the Fat Boy of *The Pickwick Papers*)...





- ...Combe Roider (a cider with the surname of the author of *Dr Syntax*), Posh Pooch (reminding me of course of Lady Jenny, the official Death and *Mr Pickwick* poodle, for no pooch is posher than she), Moreton Mild (a tippie recalling Thomas Naylor Morton, the reader at Chapman and Hall who persuaded them to keep faith with *Pickwick*) and *Mr Chubb's* (bringing to mind all the general chubbiness in *The Pickwick Papers*).



- This, I thought, is a brilliant new way of making decisions at beer festivals, when faced with a bewildering variety of possible swallows. I may have to apply this method again at the Great British Beer Festival in August....